

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 9-10, 2024



The Solution to Sin



14940 62nd St. N - Stillwater, MN 55082

651-439-7831

www.salemlutheran.org



Fourth Sunday after Lent

*Rethinking Religion—
Rethinking the Solution to Sin*

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship today. In our services we gather before our almighty God to receive his gifts and to offer him our worship and praise. Through God's powerful Word and sacraments he renews our faith and strengthens us to serve in joy.

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP: Loving Father, we come to you today in humility and praise, knowing we can stand only by the work of Christ in our place. Bless us as we hear and sing in this place, and lead us to worship you always. Amen.

THEME OF THE DAY: Every religion acknowledges that mankind's flawed attitudes or misguided actions are a source of pain, both now and potentially in eternity. So, every religion offers a solution: a set of laws, a moral code, a path to more enlightened behavior. What do they have in common? We are to solve sin through human effort. Be better! Try harder! True religion offers a better way—one that frees us from guilt and has no room for pride. Jesus teaches that the solution to our sin is to trust in the work he has done for us. Salvation comes through Spirit-given faith in Christ.

WORSHIP SERIES: Everyone makes assumptions about God. Likewise, everyone makes assumptions about religion. Increasingly, those assumptions are negative. Do we know the truth about our faith well enough to answer the questions of those who don't understand Christianity? In this year's Lenten season we turn to Jesus to see what Christian faith is truly all about. We let him replace our own assumptions with truth. Jesus, help us to rethink religion!

A WORD ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION: Our church observes the biblical practice of member communion (also called close communion). In Holy Communion we not only receive forgiveness from God, but we also express the unique relationship our members have with each other. If you are not a member of our congregation, we kindly ask that you not take communion today, but speak with our pastor after the service. We would love to share the sacrament with you in the future.

SERVING GOD, SERVING US:

Worship Leader: Pastor Ryan Wolfe

Piano: Madison Boerner

Order of Worship

CW Hymnal, Setting Four



Hymn: Jesus, Refuge of the Weary

CW 409



1 Je - sus, ref - uge of the wea - ry, blest Re - deem - er,
2 Dare we pass that cross un - heed - ing, breath - ing no re -
3 Je - sus, may our hearts be burn - ing with more fer - vent



whom we love, foun - tain in life's des - ert drear - y, Sav - ior
pent - ant vow, as we see you wound - ed, bleed - ing, see your
love for you! May our eyes be ev - er turn - ing to be -



from the world a - bove, of - ten have your eyes, of - fend - ed,
thorn - en - cir - cled brow? Since your sin - less death has brought us
hold your cross a - new, till in glo - ry, part - ed nev - er



gazed up - on the sin - ner's fall; yet, up - on the
life e - ter - nal, peace, and rest, on - ly what your
from the bless - ed Sav - ior's side, grav - en in our



cross ex - tend - ed, you en - dured the pain of all.
grace has taught us calms the sin - ner's deep dis - tress.
hearts for - ev - er dwell the cross, the Cru - ci - fied!

Please stand.

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the \dagger Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

M: Let us pray.

Grant, O merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Be seated.

First Reading

Numbers 21:4-9

The Lord promised a solution for the bite of the venomous snakes. That solution perhaps seemed nonsensical. Yet, all those who trusted God's promise lived.

⁴They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; ⁵they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

⁶Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when

we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸The LORD said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” ⁹So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

M: The Word of the Lord.

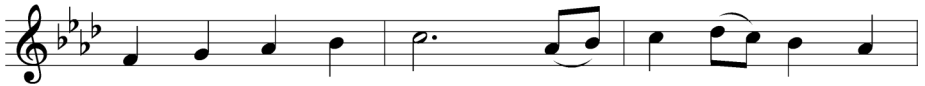
C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: How Blest Are Those

Psalm 32B



1 How blest are those the LORD for - gives; how
2 I si - lent - ly con - cealed my guilt, but
3 I then con - fessed my sin to you, my
4 Let all the faith - ful pray to you while
5 You hide me, LORD; you hold me fast in



glad they are to hear their sin is gone, their
then I groaned all day: your heav - y hand, like
griev - ous guilt and shame, and you for - gave my
you may still be found; you place them safe a -
all ad - ver - si - ty, sur - round - ing me with



guilt a - toned, their rec - ord clean and clear.
sum - mer heat, took all my strength a - way.
wick - ed - ness by your most gra - cious name.
bove the flood, se - cure on high - er ground.
faith - ful love and songs of vic - to - ry.

Second Reading

Ephesians 2:1-10

God's solution to sin is offered by grace and received through faith.

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in

mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Please stand.

Gospel

John 3:14-21

Christ is the solution to sin. Whoever believes in Christ shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

M: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated.

Children’s Devotion



1 God loved the world so that he gave his on - ly
 2 Christ is the sol - id rock of faith, who was made
 3 God would not have the sin - ner die; his Son with
 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son for - gives the



Son the lost to save that all who would in
 flesh and suf - fered death. All who con - fide in
 sav - ing grace is nigh. His Spir - it in the
 sins that you have done. You're jus - ti - fied by



him be - lieve should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 him a - lone are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 Word de - clares that we in Christ are heav - en's heirs.
 Je - sus' blood; bap - tized, you are a child of God.

- 5 If you are sick, if death is near, this truth your troubled heart can cheer:
 Christ Jesus saves my soul from death; this is the anchor of my faith!
- 6 Glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
 To you, O blessed Trinity, be praise now and eternally!

Sermon

Based on John 3:14-21

"A midnight message of love and light"

Please stand after the sermon.

THANKSGIVING

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,**

**God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Be seated.

Offering



Our members give offerings to support God's work in our church. Offerings can be put in the basket or made online by scanning the code. Visitors may give, but aren't expected to.



We ask members and visitors alike to fill out the connection card and place it in the basket now or as you leave. Please share your prayer requests that we can pray for you.



Please stand.

Prayer of the Church

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Jesus has given us a holy supper in which we receive his true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. The meal also bears witness to the unity and fellowship we share. Therefore, we invite to communion all who share in our confession by virtue of their membership here or in a sister WELS or ELS congregation. We ask visitors to speak to the pastor before communing.

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

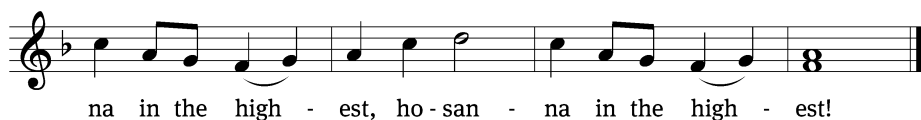
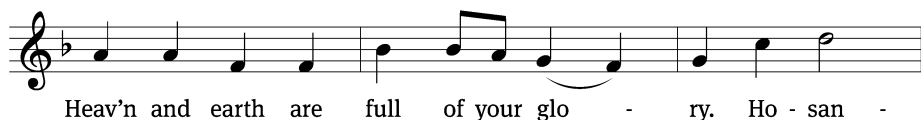
C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Words of Institution

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us your peace. A - men. A - men." The score ends with a double bar line.

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us your peace.
A - men. A - men.

Be seated.

Communion Distribution

For those who cannot have any alcohol for personal or medical reasons we offer white grape juice. You will find cups of white grape juice in the center of each communion tray. Gluten-free wafers are available by request for those medically unable to tolerate gluten.

Communicants may choose to receive the wine by individual or common cup. If you choose the common cup, please allow the individual tray to pass and then assist the minister by helping to tip the common cup.

Distribution Hymn: Pass Me Not

CW 822 sts. 1-2, Ref, 3-4



1 Pass me not, O gen - tle Sav - ior, hear my
2 Let me at thy throne of mer - cy find a
3 Trust - ing on - ly in thy mer - it, would I
4 Thou the spring of all my com - fort, more than



hum - ble cry; while on oth - ers thou art
sweet re - lief; kneel - ing there in deep con -
seek thy face; heal my wound - ed, bro - ken
life to me, whom have I on earth be -



call - ing, do not pass me by. v. 2
tri - tion, help my un - be - lief. Refrain
spir - it, save me by thy grace. v. 4
side thee, whom in heav'n but thee. Refrain



Sav - ior, Sav - ior, hear my hum - ble cry;



while on oth - ers thou art call - ing, do not pass me by.

Please stand at the pastor's direction.

Response of Thanksgiving

M: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: **His mercy endures forever.**

Psalms 118:1

M: Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,

C: **We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

1 Corinthians 11:26

Closing Prayer & Blessing

M: We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Blessing

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

Be seated.

Hymn: There Is a Redeemer

CW 519



1 There is a Re - deem - er, Je - sus, God's own Son,
2 Je - sus, my Re - deem - er, name a - bove all names,
3 When I stand in glo - ry, I will see his face;



pre-cious Lamb of God, Mes-si - ah, Ho - ly One.
pre-cious Lamb of God, Mes-si - ah, hope_ for sin - ners slain.
there I'll serve my King for-ev - er in_ that ho - ly place.

Refrain



Thank you, O my Fa - ther, for giv-ing us your Son



and leav - ing your Spir - it till the work on earth is done.

Silent Prayer and Announcements

Acknowledgments

Setting Four from Christian Worship

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Fellowship & Spiritual Growth

Sunday morning, Sunday JAM for children ages 3yrs to 6th grade starts at 9:15 am in the kindergarten room. Adult Bible study begins at 9:15 in the fellowship hall downstairs.

For Worship Next Week

Worship theme: God's Compassion to Us, God's Compassion through Us

Bible Readings: Leviticus 19:9-16, 1 John 3:16-18, Mark 8:1-9

Hymns: 953, 729, 732



Midweek Lenten Services 4:00 pm and 6:30 pm, meal between

March 13

Pastor Bob Edwards— Retired

March 20

Pastor Mark Wessel—Christ, North St. Paul

Palm Sunday Weekend (March 23/24) Regular Worship schedule

Maundy Thursday (March 28) 6:30 pm Worship with Communion

Good Friday (March 29)

10:00 am Good Friday Worship

6:30 pm Good Friday Tenebrae

Easter Sunday (March 31)

NO SATURDAY SERVICE on March 30th.

7:00 am Easter Dawn Worship with Communion

8:00 - 10:30 am Easter Breakfast

9:00 am Easter Festival Worship

10:45 am Easter Festival Worship

PREPARING FOR Easter

Easter for Kids

Salem's Easter for Kids program will be held the Saturday before Easter weekend (March 23rd) from 10am–12pm. Parents are invited to stay and “travel” with their kids to different stations as Salem members share the joy of Easter with adults and kids alike. Easter for Kids is open to all children up to 5th grade. Easter for Kids is a great chance for the unchurched to learn about our Savior too. Invite a friend! Register to attend on our website at www.salemlutheran.org.



Easter Breakfast

Each year Salem members enjoy an Easter breakfast together as part of our Easter celebration. We will continue this tradition this year! Please find the signup poster on the board in the church entry to see what items we need this year and ways to help. Thank you for serving and making our Easter joy a little brighter!

Easter Worship

Salem will celebrate Easter victory with three services on Easter Sunday morning. A sunrise service at 7am will be different from the other services, with readings and hymns reminding us of the wonder of the women's discovery of the empty tomb early Easter morning. Holy Communion will be offered in this quieter celebration of Easter victory.

Festival services at 9am & 10:45am will bring out our full-throated exultation as we celebrate loudly the meaning of Jesus' resurrection for every believer. Choirs will sing, trumpets will play, and handbells will ring as the church rejoices in Easter triumph. Join us for one or more services Easter Sunday, and invite a friend to celebrate with you.

PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

(Also printed in the hymnal)

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: *He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.*

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: *I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?*

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: *I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.*

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: *His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.*

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: *In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.*

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: *I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."*

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: *I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.*

Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

Welcome to worship!

FOR OUR GUESTS

We are glad that you joined us to worship our Savior today. If you have questions about our church or service simply ask an usher or someone near you. We're happy to help. Please take note of a few helpful things:

- † **Restrooms** are located straight down the hall opposite the sanctuary entrance. Both men's and women's restrooms are equipped with **diaper changing tables** for your convenience.
- † Our sanctuary is equipped with an amplified "loop" system for **hearing assistance**. Please set hearing aids to the "T" position.
- † You will find a **connection card** in your pew. We ask members and guests to share their names and contact info, and invite you to share requests for contact or prayers.
- † Salem members give an **offering** to support the work we do for the Lord. Guests are not expected to give anything, but if you wish to make a donation you can place it in a basket as it's passed during the service or give online.

FOR THOSE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

We love to see families worship together and we welcome children to sing and pray and grow with us in our services. Please note these special worship aids and helps for families:

- † Children's bulletins & "*quiet bags*" for your child's use in worship are available in the entry, just to the left of the office hallway. Ask an usher if you need help finding them.
- † If your child needs to be nursed or quieted for a few moments you can use our "*cry room*" down the hallway across from the restrooms. The service is shown live on a TV in the room.
- † Sunday mornings, before the hymn of the day and sermon, children of all ages are invited to come to the front of church for a short devotion on God's Word. Parents may accompany their children as they wish.

Salem Lutheran Church exists to glorify God
by teaching his timeless Truth, that all may
grow in grace and faith to share tomorrow's eternity.

