

Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

March 1, 2023

Midweek Lenten Vespers



Salt That Sweetens and Preserves

We are blessed to be God's children—cleansed of sin, renewed by the Spirit, and salted in Christ Jesus. The promised treasures in God's Word remind us of the importance of salt, which both sweetens and preserves things for our enjoyment. When Paul reminds us to let our conversations be "seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6), and when Jesus tells us that we are "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13), the image is rich, for it is not only visual, but it also engages the sense of taste. We are reminded today that we are blessed to sweeten this world with the presence of Christ in us, even as Jesus Himself preserves our lives through His Word and Spirit.

2606 Chimney Rock Road—Hendersonville, NC 28792

Church Phone 692-7027

Preschool Phone 698-5900

Church E-mail: mtpisgahlcms@gmail.com

Website: www.mtpisgahlutheran.com

Church Office Hours 9:00 AM—3:00 PM M-TH

9:00 AM—1:00 PM on Friday

Prelude

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Jacob B. Weber

Stand

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Opening Sentences

2 Corinthians 5:21, alt.; Isaiah 53:5

- P** For our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin,
C so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
P But He was wounded for our transgressions;
C He was crushed for our iniquities;
P upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
C and with His stripes we are healed.

Confession and Absolution

Based on Philippians 2:1–11

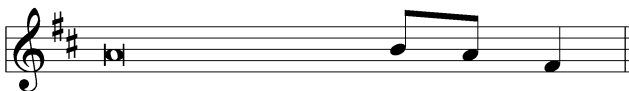
- P** Lord Jesus, search our hearts and minds that we may receive Your Word, share in Your Spirit, and be renewed in our relationships with You and with one another.

We observe a moment of silence for personal prayers of confession.

- P** With humble hearts, let us pray together:
C Lord Jesus, the Father's only Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords, hear us as we pray.
P We confess that we have not lived our lives as we ought, forgetting that You have called us to be the salt of the earth.
C Our rebellion against You in thought, word, and action is why You died for us—
P to forgive our sins, to redeem our lives, and to cancel the debt we owe to God.
C With hearts that are humble and lives ever grateful, help us to receive Your grace, bow before You in worship, and confess that You alone are Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.
- P** Almighty God our heavenly Father shows His mercy to us in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who “salts” us with His life-giving and life-preserving Word and with the sweetness of His forgiveness. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.



L O Lord, o - pen my lips,



C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;
make haste to help me, O Lord.
Glo - ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it;
as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men.
Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our sal - va - tion.

Psalm

Psalm 107:28–36 Tone D



- ²⁸Then they cried to the LORD in their | trouble,*
and he delivered them from | their distress.
- ²⁹**He made the | storm be still,***
and the waves of the | sea were hushed.
- ³⁰Then they were glad that the waters were | quiet,*
and he brought them to their desired | haven.
- ³¹**Let them thank the LORD for his | steadfast love,***
for his wondrous works to the chil- | dren of men!
- ³²Let them extol him in the congregation of the | people,*
and praise him in the assembly of the | elders.
- ³³**He turns rivers into a | desert,***
springs of water into | thirsty ground,
- ³⁴a fruitful land into a | salty waste,*
because of the evil of its in- | habitants.
- ³⁵**He turns a desert into pools of | water,***
a parched land into springs of | water.
- ³⁶And there he lets the | hungry dwell,*
and they establish a city to | live in;

Collect of the Day

- P** Let us pray... Lord Jesus Christ, You call Your people to be the salt of the earth, to sweeten and preserve this world even as You have sweetened our lives with Your forgiveness and have preserved us by Your Spirit.
- C** **Renew our hearts and minds during this Lenten season as we receive the promised treasures of Your Word;**
- P** for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Sit

Hymn

418 O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days You
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and You won; Your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet You prayed And
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, And

prayed and kept the fast; In - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; Lend us Your nerve, Your
fixed Your mind a - bove; So teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, That when the fi - nal

for our sin, And free us from our past.
skill and trust In God's e - ter - nal Word.
ny our - selves, Since we have known God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, We join in heav - en's praise.

Readings

Reading

2 Kings 2:19–22

- P** A reading from Second Kings, the second chapter.

¹⁹Now the men of the city said to Elisha, “Behold, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees, but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful.” ²⁰He said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him. ²¹Then he went to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, “Thus says the LORD, I have healed this water; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it.” ²²So the water has been healed to this day, according to the word that Elisha spoke.

- P** O Lord, have mercy on us.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Reading

Colossians 4:2–6

P A reading from Colossians, the fourth chapter.

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

⁵Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Reading

Matthew 5:13–16

P A reading from St. Matthew, the fifth chapter.

¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Responsory (Lent)

LSB 231

The musical notation for the Verse and Refrain of "The Rose Tree" is shown. The Verse consists of a single measure with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). The Refrain consists of a single measure with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). The notation is labeled "Verse" and "To Refrain".

L 1 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are
the God of my sal - va - tion.
2 In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O Lord, my God.
3 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are
the God of my sal - va - tion.

Refrain



The Refrain is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. This is followed by another whole rest, then a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The piece ends with a double bar line.

**Rescue me from my en - e - mies, protect me
from those who rise a - gainst me.**

Hymn

423 Jesus, Refuge of the Weary



1 Je - sus, ref - uge of the wea - ry, Blest Re - deem - er,
 2 Do 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 drea - ry, Sav - ior
 pen - tant vow, Though 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? Yet 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

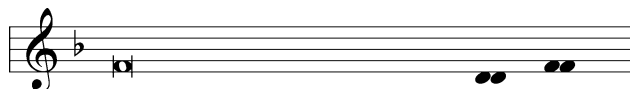


cross ex - tend - ed, You have borne the pain of all.
 grace has taught us Calms the sin - ner's deep dis - tress.
 hearts for - ev - er, Dwell the cross, the Cru - ci - fied.

Sermon

Canticle

Stand



L Let my prayer rise before You as in - cense,

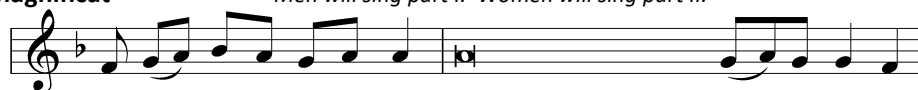


C and the lifting up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

Magnificat

Men will sing part I. Women will sing part II.

LSB 231



C My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Sav-ior;



I for He has re-gard - ed the lowliness of His hand-maid - en.



II For be-hold, from this day all generations will call me bless - ed.



I For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;



II and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to gen - er - a - tion.



I He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the



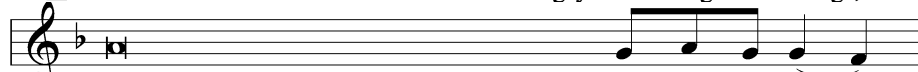
imagination of their hearts. **II** He has cast down the



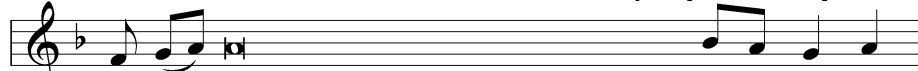
might-y from their thrones and has ex - alt - ed the low - ly.



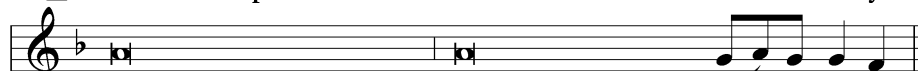
I He has filled the hun - gry with good things,



and the rich He has sent emp - ty a - way.



II He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mer - cy



as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for-ev-er.



C Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son and to the Ho - ly Spir - it;



as it was in the be-gin - ning, is now, and will be for - ev - er. A-men.

Sit

Offering

On My Impinge Your Image

Ruth Garchow Mackie

Prayer

Stand

Kyrie

LSB 233



C Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.

Lord's Prayer

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Collects



L O Lord, hear my prayer.



C And let my cry come to You.

P Gracious God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You for blessing us with the opportunity to meditate again on the cross of Christ and receive Your promised treasures.

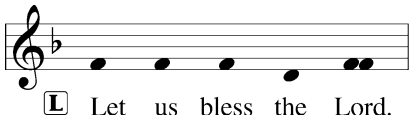
C Grant that the message of the Lamb of God slain for our salvation bring us the riches of Your pardon and peace.

P Lead us to see that our sins caused Jesus' great agony in the garden, that our sins nailed Him to the cross of Calvary,

- C** that He was forsaken by His Father so that we might never be forsaken, and that He died so that we may live.
- P** Lord Jesus, grant that especially during this sacred season the treasured story of Your wondrous love for us would draw us closer to You.
- C** Enable us to see that we are the salt of the earth, preserved by Your grace and sweetened by Your forgiveness.
- P** Holy Spirit, lift up troubled souls everywhere. Grant wholeness to those hurting in heart, body, and mind. Work Your healing power in the lives of those in need.
- C** All glory, honor, and praise be to You, with the Father and the Son, one God, now and forever. Amen.
- P** O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness.
- C** I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

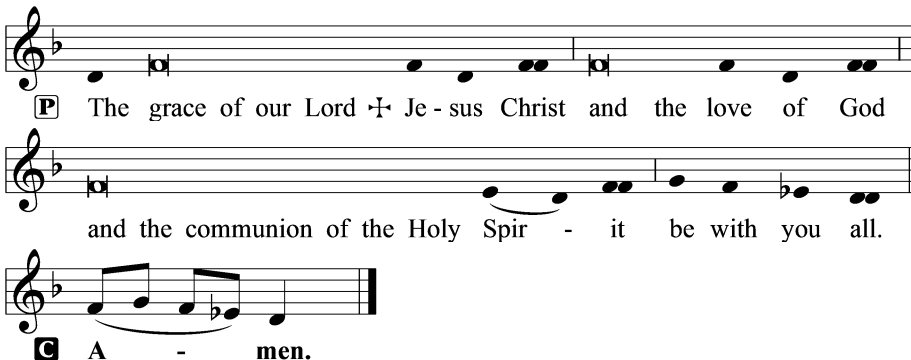
Benedicamus

LSB 234



Benediction

LSB 234



Hymn

425 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast Save in the
3 See, from His head, His hands, His feet Sor - row and
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a



Prince of Glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God; All the vain things that
love flow min - gled down! Did e'er such love and
trib - ute far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
sor - row meet Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all!

Postlude

O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days

David N. Johnson

Home Devotional: Salt Sweetens and Preserves

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.” Matthew 5:13

Introduction

You are God’s own dear child, baptized, washed, and salted in Christ. This Lenten walk reminds us that Jesus died on Calvary’s cross to clean and scour us completely from sin’s power and eternal death. God is never distant from you but actually very near. He comes to deliver you and preserve you in the midst of all your troubles. He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (see Psalm 34). One biblical and tangible example of how well God preserves us is through the element of salt. Since salt is often referred to in the Scriptures, it was often utilized in baptismal rites. In the earliest baptismal rites, the catechumen received salt during the rite as a physical sign that all Christian lives are seasoned with salt. The new Christian’s mind is seasoned with the salt of wisdom through God’s Holy Word. St. Augustine also included it for baptismal candidates, after they received the sign of the cross, to preserve and season them. Later, even Luther’s first order and earlier rite of Baptism, 1523, included varied visible elements in the baptismal rite, including salt. Salt, in the ancient world, was a precious and preserving commodity. Today, it is still a useful visible symbol to teach us what Christians are in this world.

When the prophet Elisha confronted a particular problem of bad, unhealthy, and unpleasant water in the city of Jericho, God enabled him to do a miracle. In response to this need, Elisha miraculously healed the sick water with salt. After he threw salt into the spring, all the water was restored for drinking and daily use. Salt was an expensive commodity in biblical times. It was used in sacrificial rites and covenants (see Numbers 18:19). Salt was also a way to preserve things, such as meat (like beef jerky today), in times without refrigeration.

Beyond salt's preserving power, however, salt is also a source of taste. Jesus told His disciples that they were the salt of the earth, bringing wholesome value to the world by their love, words, and good deeds. St. Paul similarly spoke about the power of speaking the Word and making known to others the mystery of Christ. He encouraged the Colossian Church to season their words with salt so that they would be well seasoned, tasty, preserving, and lasting for the one who received them (see Colossians 4:2–6). One common idiom regarding the negative quality of a person is often still used today: “not worth his salt!” If you are not worth your salt, the implication is that you are not a hard worker or a credible person. The word *salary* is a derivative of the Latin word *salarium*. The way one is compensated for his work will determine how well he may provide for himself and his family. Finally, salt is often used to describe a healthy life.

Questions (Answers at the End)

- Q1. What are the most common ways you use salt today? How do you use it to season? Do you ever use it to sweeten or preserve? Why do some people even put salt on watermelon before they eat it?
- Q2. Is there anything sour, troubling, or unfruitful presently in your life? Is your health compromised? Do you have some bitter or strained relationships with people? Is your employment situation stressful?
- Q3. Why does Jesus have to warn us about losing our saltiness in Matthew 5:13? Hint: How does St. Paul use salt in an instructive way for all Christians in Colossians 4:2–6?
- Q4. Does your body actually need some salt in order to survive?
- Q5. When a Christian dies, he or she is promised to be with the Lord forever. On account of that, what comfort can be derived from knowing that he or she was the salt of the earth?

Conclusion

Jesus Christ is with you now, sweetening and preserving your life and those around you. That is His promise to you in your Baptism. He promises you power from eternal death and preserves your life now and for all eternity. The only way salt is depleted or lost is when we are cut off from the Vine, Jesus Christ. If we cut ourselves off from God's Word and fail to hear it or to receive His Sacraments, our lives are depleted of salt, purpose, and joy. Even though life is daily torn by sin, broken relationships, and faltering health, Jesus promises to preserve and keep you in the midst of it, working all things for your good (Romans 8:28). He will, even in this time of life, sweeten all things with renewed hope and purpose! By Christ's resurrection from the dead, your life has real purpose and meaning. Like a saltshaker, you are sweetening some lives, being wholesome to others, and preserving the lives of many in this world.

Closing

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, You have called us the salt of the earth. We confess that our lives have not always been salty. Our speech and life often have not been distinct from the world because we have blended with the world. We have not added a distinct flavor in this world, nor have we preserved that which is good. By our Baptism into Your holy name and Your cross and resurrection, sprinkle us with salt so that by Your grace and mercy our lives, flavored by You, may express love and life to everyone we meet. We pray all these things in Your precious name. Amen.

Answers

- A1. We use salt to season our food. If the right amount of salt is used with food, the taste may be greatly improved. Sometimes, salt can even bring out the sweetness of some fruit when added.
- A2. In the midst of life's most sour and bitter experiences, Jesus Christ comes to sweeten, enliven, and refresh you through His healing Word and Sacraments. You are God's own dear child, baptized, washed, and salted in Christ. This Lenten walk reminds us that Jesus died on Calvary's cross to salt the wounds of life completely from sin and eternal death. God is not distant; He promises to deliver you from all your troubles and to heal those things most broken in life. "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).
- A3. Because, sadly, too many people live hopelessly without the comfort of hope in their lives. If we, as baptized Christians, fail to exhibit with our lives and speech a unique, joyous, and promising word to those all around us, we are omitting what we are called to do. Our life now is to serve and love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love and serve our neighbor. What is it that we bring to this world that warns of sin and death and, most importantly, offers eternal hope and life in Jesus Christ?
- A4. Yes, the body needs salt. We have a certain amount of healthy sodium in our bodies. If our sodium levels are too high or too low, our body's function is greatly inhibited. However, typically, salt is not an element within us, but God gives, provides, and blesses us with salt just as Elisha provided the salt in the water of Jericho to sweeten the spring for drinking.
- A5. If a loved one is baptized and salted in Christ, we are assured that even though his or her body is laid to rest, as he or she sleeps in death, God will also preserve that body, the remains, until He comes again to raise the living and the dead (see 1 Corinthians 15). We dwell in God's real words of comfort and the promise of eternal life in Christ.