

Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

March 8, 2023

Midweek Lenten Vespers



Water Gives Me Life

Water is life. Water is everywhere. Not only is this true in the world around us, but it is also true in the Scriptures. Throughout the Bible, we witness our Creator giving us new life—cleansing, reshaping, even re-creating—through the water of the Spirit and through the living and active Word of Jesus. Today our attention is drawn to the promised treasure of the life-giving water that God uses to claim us as His children and unite us to His Son's death and resurrection. With the Savior, who steps into the water with us, we "daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever" (Small Catechism, Baptism, Fourth Part).

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

9:00 AM—1:00 PM on Friday

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

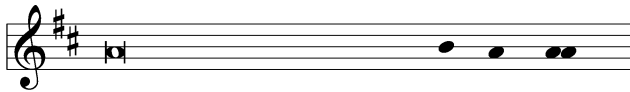
Based on Philippians 2:1–11

- 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 Even though You claimed us as Your own in the waters of Baptism, we often do not walk in the newness of life.
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 blesses us with new birth in the water and the Spirit and assures us that our lives belong to Him. 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.

C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



L Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;



C make haste to help me, O Lord.



C 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.

Psalmody

Psalm

Psalm 23 Tone G



¹The LORD is my shepherd; I | shall not want. *

²He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still | waters.

³He re- | stores my soul. *

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his | name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for you are | with me; *

your rod and your staff, they | comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my | enemies; *

you anoint my head with oil; my cup | overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life, *

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for- | ever.

Collect of the Day

P Let us pray... Lord Jesus Christ, through water You reshape and restore Your fallen creation, entering our lives in Baptism so that we may be cleansed 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.

Hymn

435 Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain

1 Come to Cal-v'ry's ho-ly moun-tain, Sin-ners, ru-ined
 2 Come in pov-er-ty and mean-ness, Come de-filed, with-
 3 Come in sor-row and con-tri-tion, Wound-ed, im-po-
 4 They that drink shall live for-ev-er; 'Tis a soul-re-
 by the fall; Here a pure and heal-ing foun-tain
 out, with-in; From in-fec-tion and un-clean-ness,
 tent, and blind; Here the guilt-y, free re-mis-sion,
 new-ing flood. God is faith-ful; God will nev-er
 Flows for you, for me, for all, In a full, per-
 From the lep-ro-sy of sin, Wash your robes and
 Here the trou-bled, peace may find. Health this foun-tain
 Break His cov-e-nant of blood, Signed when our Re-
 pet-ual tide, O-pened when our Sav-ior died.
 make them white; Ye shall walk with God in light.
 will re-store; They that drink shall thirst no more.
 deem-er died, Sealed when He was glo-ri-fied.

Readings

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 7:11–23

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.

¹²And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. ²¹And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and

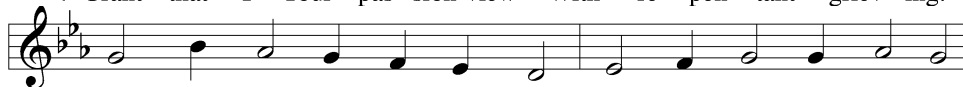
**Rescue me from my en - e - mies, protect me
from those who rise a - gainst me.**

Hymn

440 Jesus, I Will Ponder Now



1 Je - sus, I will pon - der now On Your ho - ly pas - sion;
 2 Make me see Your great dis - tress, An - guish, and af - flic - tion,
 3 Yet, O Lord, not thus a - lone Make me see Your pas - sion,
 4 Grant that I Your pas - sion view With re - pen - tant griev - ing.



With Your Spir - it me en - dow For such med - i - ta - tion.
 Bonds and stripes and wretch - ed - ness And Your cru - ci - fix - ion;
 But its cause to me make known And its ter - mi - na - tion.
 Let me not bring shame to You By un - ho - ly liv - ing.



Grant that I in love and faith May the im - age cher - ish
 Make me see how scourge and rod, Spear and nails did wound You,
 Ah! I al - so and my sin Wrought Your deep af - flic - tion;
 How could I re - fuse to shun Ev - 'ry sin - ful plea - sure



Of Your suf - f'ring, pain, and death That I may not per - ish.
 How for them You died, O God, Who with thorns had crowned You.
 This in - deed the cause has been Of Your cru - ci - fix - ion.
 Since for me God's on - ly Son Suf - fered with - out mea - sure?

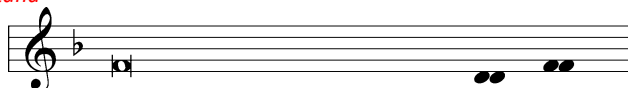
5 If my sins give me alarm
 And my conscience grieve me,
 Let Your cross my fear disarm;
 Peace of conscience give me.
 Help me see forgiveness won
 By Your holy passion.
 If for me He slays His Son,
 God must have compassion!

6 Graciously my faith renew;
 Help me bear my crosses,
 Learning humbleness from You,
 Peace mid pain and losses.
 May I give You love for love!
 Hear me, O my Savior,
 That I may in heav'n above
 Sing Your praise forever.

Sermon

Canticle

Stand



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



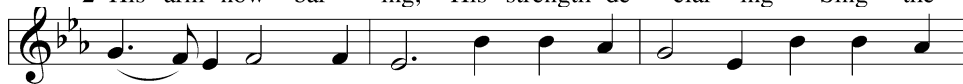
C and the lifting up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

Hymn

933 My Soul Rejoices



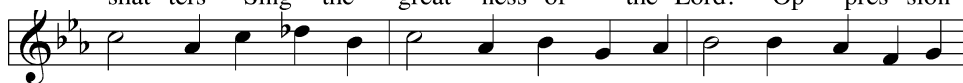
1 My soul re - joic - es, My spir - it voic - es— Sing the
2 His arm now bar - ing, His strength de - clar - ing— Sing the



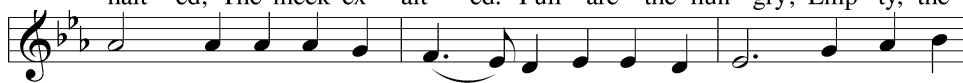
great - ness of the Lord! For God my Sav - ior Has shown me
great - ness of the Lord! The proud He scat - ters, Their rule He



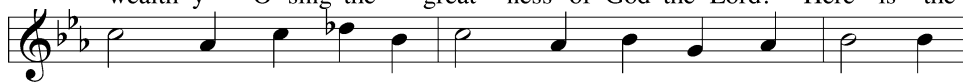
fa - vor— Sing the great - ness of the Lord! With praise and
shat - ters— Sing the great - ness of the Lord! Op - pres - sion



bles - sing, Join in con - fess - ing God, who is sole - ly Might - y and
halt - ed; The meek ex - alt - ed. Full are the hun - gry; Emp - ty, the



ho - ly— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord! His mer - cy
wealth - y— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord! Here is the



sure - ly Shall rest se - cure - ly On all who fear Him,
to - ken All that was spo - ken To A - br'ham's off - spring



Love and re - vere Him— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord!
God is ful - fill - ing— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord!

Sit

Offering

My Soul Rejoices

Theodore Beck

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** Lord Jesus Christ, through water You reshape and restore Your fallen creation, entering our lives in Baptism so that we may be cleansed by Your Spirit. Renew our hearts and minds during this Lenten season as we receive the promised treasures of Your Word; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.
- 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 the blessings You have poured out into our lives through the washing of water with the Word.
- 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, [*especially . . .*], and in the lives of all we name before You in our hearts.
- C** All glory, honor, and praise be to You, with the Father and the Son, one God, now and forever. Amen.
- L** 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** For freedom You have set us free through Christ's liberating death and resurrection. In this freedom, teach us to live in the fruit of the Spirit given us in our Baptism that we may bear in our bodies the fulfillment of the Law as we love our neighbors as ourselves; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

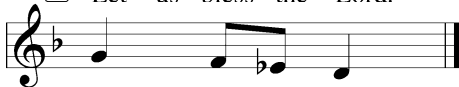
Stand

Benedicamus

LSB 234



L Let us bless the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 234



P The grace of our Lord ✠ Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



C A - men.

Hymn

433 Glory Be to Jesus



1 Glo - ry be to Je - sus, Who in bit - ter pains
2 Grace and life e - ter - nal In that blood I find;
3 Blest through end - less a - ges Be the pre - cious stream
4 A - bel's blood for ven - geance Plead - ed to the skies;



Poured for me the life - blood From His sa - cred veins!
Blest be His com - pas - sion, In - fi - nite - ly kind!
Which from end - less tor - ment Did the world re - deem!
But the blood of Je - sus For our par - don cries.

5 Oft as earth exulting
Wafts its praise on high,
Angel hosts rejoicing
Make their glad reply.

6 Lift we, then, our voices,
Swell the mighty flood;
Louder still and louder
Praise the precious blood!

Postlude

Glory Be to Jesus

G. Winston Cassier

Home Devotional: Water and the Gift of Life

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.” Psalm 23:1–2

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” John 3:5

Introduction

Water is the most common element in our world, and it circulates throughout Scripture to wash, cleanse, flood, and reshape. Like a potter, your heavenly Father remodels you every day, conforming you more closely to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. Often, Easter Vigil services include numerous Bible readings with water narratives, including the words about Noah and the flood account with his family and Moses and the parting of the Red Sea with the people of Israel. Luther recounts such water and washing experiences of the people of God and the Church, including those in the Jordan River, in his baptismal flood prayer. It is interesting to also read some of the words from the ancient west Syrian (Turkish) rites on the water of Holy Baptism. They taught the water is similar to a crucible, a cross, where your old mortal nature is dying while you are taking on a new eternal and incorruptible life. God is described as a potter who is constantly making you and shaping you, like wet, moldable clay, into a beautiful object or vase. You, like a moldable pot, have not been fired, but someday you will be.

In Holy Baptism, all your sin is washed away. You are clean, just as Naaman was made clean of his leprosy after washing in the Jordan River (see 2 Kings 5). You are remade and reshaped by water, drowning the old you to be conformed and restored anew every day into the image of Christ. “Thus you see how rich a Christian is, that is, one who has been baptized! Even if he would, he could not lose his salvation, however much he sinned, unless he refused to believe. For no sin can condemn him save unbelief alone.” New life in Jesus Christ begins and continues to exist every day within the waters of Holy Baptism. Although the world is uncertain and hopeless, filled with new challenges and trials, the Christian is never uncertain, because Christ is true yesterday, today, and forever. United to Christ, no wave or tempest will blow down or drown the baptized believer in Christ.

Questions (Answers at the End)

- Q1. The “still waters” of Psalm 23 are often an image of peace and serenity for the people of God. Why is that so?
- Q2. If the worldwide flood in the days of Noah was such a deathly tragedy, then why does St. Peter use this account to say that the flood of Baptism is a blessing that “now saves you” (1 Peter 3:21)?
- Q3. The people of God remain afloat above the sin and death of the entire world. Although we are subject to temporal death, we are not subject to eternal death and torment in hell. One way this is illustrated for many congregations is that the worship space where congregants sit is called the nave. Do you know why it is called that?
- Q4. Nicodemus, probably an older man and Jewish leader in the Sanhedrin, was stunned and shocked when Jesus told him that in order to be saved one must be born of the water and the Spirit. Then, he asked Jesus, How can a man be physically reborn in his mother’s womb? How would you describe that kind of birth? How is spiritual birth uniquely different than physical birth and yet also the same? Are you born again or born from above?

Conclusion

Holy Baptism is when you were spiritually born and how you are joyfully reborn every day. Since you were grafted into Jesus, the Vine, and into His Church by water and the Word, you live, move, and have your being only in Him (see Acts 17:28). Just as your mother’s womb so beautifully protected you in water when God knitted you together (see Psalm 139:13), so now the Holy Spirit protects you in the womb of your new mother, the Holy Church.

Your heavenly Father reshapes and rewashes you every day with baptismal water. By the Holy Spirit, He reshapes your life, molding you like wet clay into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. Your old Adam is drowned so that a new you is resurrected. This is why Dr. Martin Luther said, “The Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.” Lent is all about drowning an old you so that a new joyful you arises. Although the “nave” and church is dark now and full of purple—reminding us of Christ’s passion, death, and tomb—we will not stay here. We will arise from our tomb on Easter.

Closing

Prayer: Almighty God, You wonderfully made us and wove us beautifully in the water of our mother's womb, giving us physical life. Now, by Your grace and mercy, You have also made the waters of Baptism the way for us to be born again from above, having new spiritual life given by Your Holy Spirit. Help us to joyfully swim in Your baptismal waters each day so that our life and behavior may draw others to desire this eternal life, so that You may be glorified and that others enter the kingdom of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. In His name, we pray. Amen.

Answers

- A1. Like a gentle shepherd who leads lambs to fresh water to drink and to green pastures to lay down, God always sustains, refreshes, and nourishes His people.
- A2. The account of the flood was devastating to all the life of the entire ancient world. All life that was not on board the ark, except for creatures in the water, was extinguished and drowned. The sinful flesh must be drowned often, daily as Luther says in the Small Catechism. The sinful flesh is never dead in the life of the Christian. The waters of your Baptism promise you that every day your sin is drowned with Christ so that you may arise anew with a clean conscience to serve the living God.
- A3. The derivative root for the Latin word nave is where we get our English word navy. Our United States Navy protects our country by sea on ships. When we worship every Lord's Day (Sunday), or at other times, we are recognizing that we are being saved from this sinful world in the ship, or ark, of Christ's Church. Since Jesus Christ suffered death for all sin once for all, we live with that hope. Since sin is put to death in you, you are made alive by the Holy Spirit. By baptismal water, you will be safely brought to God's eternal shore someday, having a clean conscience through Christ's resurrection from the dead.
- A4. Anyone who is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is born of the Holy Spirit. Jesus instructed Nicodemus that all people have a fleshly birth but not all people have a spiritual birth. To be spiritually born requires the death and drowning of the sinful flesh. To be born anew, of both water and the Spirit, provides access and entrance into the kingdom of God.