

INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

✠ Second Sunday in Lent • February 25th, 2024 ✠

Worship Notes: • Our Lector is Connie Hinson • Our Crucifer is John Sawicki • We are in Setting 1 of the ELW •

VOLUNTARY:

Amazing Grace

David Schelat

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Please stand as able and face the back of the church.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus. **Amen.**

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Holy God, we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free. We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold. We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up. We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred. For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.

Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through Christ. It is through the name of ✠ Jesus Christ that I declare to you that your sins are forgiven. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN: ELW 793

Be Thou My Vision
SLANE

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ and take up our own for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST READING: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you." ¹⁵God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 73: 23-28

Spoken responsively.

²³Nevertheless I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.

²⁴**You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me with honor.**

²⁵Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you.

²⁶**My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.**

²⁷Indeed, those who are far from you will perish;
you put an end to those who are false to you.

²⁸**But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
to tell of all your works.**

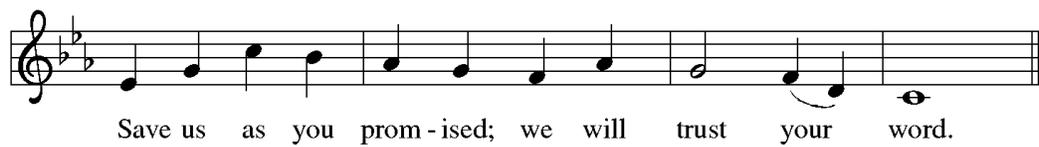
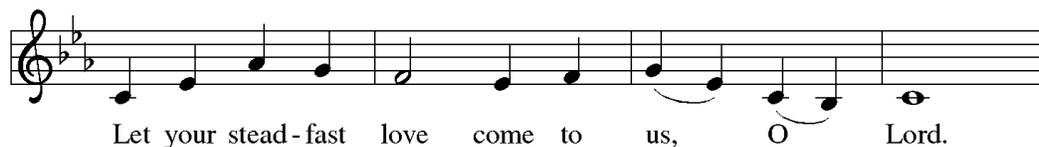
SECOND READING: Romans 4:13-25

¹³The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. ¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹being

fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²²Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ²³Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, ²⁴but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW p.103



GOSPEL: Mark 8:31-38

Please stand as able.

Before the Reading: The Holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

³¹[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” ³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

After the Reading: The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON MEDITATION

Pastor Emily Willhide

Our sermon today is the cantata “Still, I will always stay with you.” This piece of music explores the difficulty of maintaining faith during times of testing or hardship. It is a struggle that is familiar to every person of faith. Indeed, it is safe to say that no one of faith has ever lived a life free of temptation. Even the best of us can find themselves struggling to do the “right thing” when the “wrong thing” is so much easier and so much more fun. Neither has any person lived who has not experienced hardship or testing. While those two things are not the same, we understand that God can use all circumstances and all events in a life to challenge and grow our faith. Certainly our faith is tested each day as we walk out into the world and struggle to live our lives according to the way of the gospel instead of the way of the world.

We sometimes struggle with this aspect of our faith, but the cantata this morning finds an answer, or at least a resolution, to testing and temptation in the words of Psalm 73:23-28. In the opening verses of this psalm, the psalmist, Asaph, struggles with a good God allowing wickedness and evil to prosper. He confesses that it has caused him to stumble in his faith, wondering if his faithfulness has been an exercise in futility.

Where we begin this reading this morning, Asaph has come to the conclusion that his hope and strength remains in God and that his only recourse is to stay close to God. Verse 23, “Nevertheless I am continually with you,” is echoed in the cantata’s repeating refrain “Still, I will always stay with you.” And the psalmist’s hopeful and faith-affirming conclusion, “But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, to tell of all your works,” is mirrored in the final chorale’s exhortation to those who suffer to keep hope and faith in times of challenge, promising that God will reveal beauty through even the hardest of afflictions.

CANTATA: Dennoch blieb ich stets an dir, *GWV 1121/34 (1734)*, *Christoph Graupner (1683-1760)*
Libretto by Johann Conrad Lichtenberg (1689-1751)

Violin, Susan Cramer

Violin, Amy Herin

Viola, Audrey Harris

Continuo, Patrick Hawkins

Translated by Cristal Lamb

Dictum

Maggie Murdoch, Alto

Still I will always stay with you, for you hold me by my right hand.

You lead me according to your counsel and finally accept me with honor.

Aria

Elliott Stewart, Bass

Still, I will always stay with you; Jesus will you condemn me?

I must suffer, I must languish; may you say: get away from me;

Still, I will always stay with you.

Give to me Satan’s blows; your mercy will not be stirred up;

and comes affliction to the death; still, I will always stay with you.

Recitativo

Tyler Morgan, Bass

It feels painfully close when believers in deep despair beg for deliverance in vain.

This, says the enemy, all will go through this who will not value world and joy — the light of faith is often shrouded in darkness.

However, the hidden power of the Lord is never far. He will not abandon his people.

The strong mind of testing only has to stir the flames of faith more.

Therefore, even if Jesus seems distant, a believer will still honor him.

Aria

Angela Pinkham Varnon

Roar, you waves of testing. Blow, blow, you prince of hell.
Defiance, defiance, my faith will not waver, my faith will not waver.
Jesus' word and his heart are known to me, his heart is known to me.
This port is my open shelter. Is there weakness in hope?
Jesus offers me his hand.

Recitativo

Angela Pinkham Varnon

Oh soul, be brave and don't leave the gates of your faith,
although Jesus withholds all comfort.
He is just testing you, if you are steadfast and loyal, so you will
thank him that he is your God and helper.

Chorale

The Incarnation Lutheran Church Choir

Hope, O you poor soul, hope and be undeterred.
God will bring you out of the cave, when sorrow plagues you, with great mercy.
Wait for the time, and you will see the sun of the most beautiful joy.

HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW 322 (V.1-4)

Oh, Love, How Deep
DEO GRACIAS

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Please stand as able.

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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition concludes "*Hear us, O God.*" We respond: "**Your mercy is great.**"

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

MEAL

The offering plate will be passed throughout the Congregation for those not using online giving.

Please stand as able.

OFFERING PRAYER

Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING: ELW p.190

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY: ELW p.108

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God. Welcome to the table of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**
Please be seated.

COMMUNION - *We invite you to join with us in the sacrament of Holy Communion, as Jesus invites us all to the table. Please take an empty communion glass from the trays at the front of the church. The innermost ring of glasses are pre-filled with grape juice for those who prefer juice to wine. There are discard trays by the side aisles. Please follow the directions of the Ushers.*

LAMB OF GOD: ELW p.112



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -



way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Please stand as able.

Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, make us one to care for the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

Beloved, we are God’s own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ✠ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN: ELW 545

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing
SICILIAN MARINERS

DISMISSAL:

Go in peace. Love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

VOLUNTARY:

When Jesus Wept

David Schelat

Join us for Coffee Time in the Fellowship Hall

Our Ministry Staff contacts are:

- Rev. Emily Willhide.....pastoremily@incarnationlutheran.com
- Dr. Patrick Hawkins; Dir. of Music & Organist.....music@incarnationlutheran.com
- Kimi Dail; Faith Formation Coordinator.....youth@incarnationlutheran.com
- Teresa Boykin; CDC Director.....cdc@incarnationlutheran.com
- Charlotte Dover; Parish Administrator.....office@incarnationlutheran.com
- Beth Sheedy; Seminarian.....office@incarnationlutheran.com

Worship: Sundays at 10 a.m.

(10 a.m. Worship is also live streamed on Facebook.)

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

3005 Devine Street, Columbia, SC 29205

Office: 803-256-2381

CDC: 803-256-7456

www.incarnationlutheran.com

www.facebook.com/IncarnationLutheranChurch