

## WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

**THE BIBLE** – We believe that EVERY word in the Bible is inspired by God, and therefore the whole Bible is the true, unalterable Word of God, clearly teaching the way of salvation. (2Ti. 3:15-17).

**GOD** – We believe that God is ONE (Dt. 6:4) and that He has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons (Mt. 3:13-17), the Father, our Creator and Preserver; the Son, Jesus, Who is both God and Man, and our only Saviour; the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts and enables us to live a God-pleasing life.

**MAN** – We believe that God created man with body and soul, in His image, but man of his own free will lost this image through sin. (Gn. 1:27; 2:7; 3.)

**SIN** – “Sin is the transgression of the Law.” (1Jn 3:4). There are two kinds of sin: original (inherited) sin (Ps. 51:5) and actual sin (sin in thought, word and deed) (Mt. 15:19). Man is subject to death and eternal damnation by reason of the guilt that attaches to sin.

**REDEMPTION** – We believe that God out of pure love and mercy redeemed mankind from sin through the all-sufficient sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, and His resurrection shows that God was satisfied with the work of Christ. (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Ro. 4:25).

**FAITH** – We believe that the sinner must personally receive the merits of Jesus for salvation and trust that, “Jesus died for me.” (Jn 17:3; Ja 1:21; Ps. 31:14).

**THE CHURCH** – We believe that the church, established by Christ is the whole number of believers in Christ, for only believers are members of the church. Jesus Christ is its one and only foundation (Ep. 2:19-22). The church is found wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution.

**SACRAMENTS** – We believe that Christ instituted two sacraments, and when Baptism is administered to infants and adults, according to the command of Christ, God offers His grace and forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). In the Lord’s Supper communicants receive in, with and under the bread and wine also Christ’s body and blood. Believing communicants receive this for the forgiveness of sins (1Co. 11:24-25).

**SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** – We believe that Christ will return visibly to earth (Acts 1:11) on the Last Day (Mk. 13:32) to judge the world (Acts 10:42). The believers will go to heaven, to be with God forever (1Th. 4:13-18). The unbelievers will go to hell, eternally separated from God (Mt. 25:32, 46).

**RESURRECTION** – We believe that on the Last Day believers in Christ will rise from the dead, their souls reunited with their earthly bodies and glorified by Christ (Jn 14:19; 17:24).

# The Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2023

## INTROIT

*Psalm 27:4-6; Antiphon: Psalm 25:15*

*My eyes are ever toward the LORD,*

for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

*One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:*

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

*For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;*

he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;

he will lift me high upon a rock.

*And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me,*

*and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;*

I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning,**

**is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*My eyes are ever toward the LORD,*

for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

**P** *Almighty God, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**C** *♪[Amen]♪*

## GRADUAL

*Hebrew 12:2*

*[O come, let us fix our eyes on] Jesus,*

the founder and perfecter of our faith,

*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,*

*despising the shame,*

and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

## VERSE

*Psalm 36:9*

*With you is the fountain of life;*

in your light do we see light.

## RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

*After each petition:*

**P** Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** hear our prayer.

## **Isaiah 42:14-21 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant.

<sup>15</sup> I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. <sup>16</sup> And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them. <sup>17</sup> They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, “You are our gods.” <sup>18</sup> Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! <sup>19</sup> Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the LORD? <sup>20</sup> He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. <sup>21</sup> The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness’ sake, to magnify his law and make it glorious.

## **Ephesians 5:8-14 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> [For] at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), <sup>10</sup> and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

## **John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39 (ESV)**

As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup> and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>34</sup> They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup> He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” <sup>38</sup> He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “For judgment I

came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

#### **FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

Isaiah 42:14–21

Ephesians 5:8–14

John 9:1–41 *or* John 9:1–7, 13–17, 34–39

#### ***By His Word of the Gospel, Jesus Calls Us Out of the Darkness into His Marvelous Light***

The Lord is grieved by the spiritual blindness of His people, yet in mercy He does not forsake them. He restrains His anger and keeps His peace, until He opens their ears and eyes to hear and see Him. “*For His righteousness’ sake*” He magnifies His Word and makes it glorious in the coming of Christ Jesus (Is. 42:21). Jesus turns “*the darkness before them into light*” (Is. 42:16), because He is “*the Light of the world*” (John 9:5). The incarnate Son of God works the works of His Father and displays the divine glory in His own flesh “*while it is day*” until that night “*when no one can work*” (John 9:4). By the washing of water with His Word He opens the eyes of the blind and grants rest to the weary. Therefore, though “*at one time you were darkness,*” now “*you are light in the Lord*” (Eph. 5:8). By our Baptism into Christ we live in the eternal day of His Resurrection, wherein He shines upon us. As often as we fall back into the darkness of sin, He calls us by the Gospel to “*Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead*” (Eph. 5:14).

#### ***Next Week’s Readings from God’s Word:***

March 26: Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130 (v7); Romans 8:1-11; John 11:1-45 or John 11:17-27, 38-53