

# *Christ Lutheran Church*

*300 E. Monroe St.*

*Austin, TX 78704*

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*"The People of Christ Sharing the Love of Christ"*

## **FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

March 22, 2020

### **AS WE GATHER**

It's said that darkness is nothing more than the absence of light. Darkness and blindness are words often used throughout Scripture to describe our sinfulness—the absence of the true Light. In our continued Lenten journey, we prepare our hearts for the dark afternoon of Good Friday at the cross. Yet even in that darkness, Jesus Christ brings the light of life. In our times of spiritual blindness and comfort in the darkness of this world, we gather again today to see His light through our vision of Spirit-given faith, that our eyes may look to Him who is the light of the world—the light no darkness can overcome.

### **PRELUDE**

### **WELCOME**

**OPENING HYMN**      *"Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies"*

LSB #873

Christ, whose glory fills the skies, Christ, the true and only light,  
Sun of righteousness, arise; Triumph o'er the shades of night.  
Dayspring from on high, be near; Daystar, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the mourn Unaccompanied by Thee;  
Joyless is the day's return Till Thy mercy's beams I see,  
Till They inward light impart, Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine, Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;  
Fill me, radiancy divine, Scatter all my unbelief;  
More and more Thyself display, Shining to the perfect day.

(Please rise)

### **INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People:**      **Amen.**

### **OPENING SENTENCES**

Pastor:      Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it,

**People:**      **who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:**

Pastor:      "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,

**People:**      **to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."**

### **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Pastor:      In the darkness of the world around us and amid our own blindness to His will and ways, God calls us to confess our sins.

**People:**      **Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

*Silence for reflection and self-examination*

Pastor: God of God, Light of light,

**People:** **we confess that by nature we are sinful and unclean, born in darkness. We are often blind to Your Word and Your work in our lives, sinning against You and against one another in thought, word, and deed. For the sake of Jesus, who is the light of the world, forgive me all my sins, that my eyes may be opened and my heart enlightened to look to You in faith and hope.**

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. Through His death on the cross, Jesus Christ has shined His eternal light of forgiveness, peace, and life on you. In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ as a called and ordained servant of the Word, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People:** **Amen.**

### **SALUTATION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People:** **And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we remain in darkness without Your light, and we walk in blindness if You do not lead. Even in our times of comfort in the darkness and times of willful blindness, You shine Your light of truth and call us Your children of light that we may see and live in Your grace. Help us to acknowledge Your goodness, give thanks for all Your blessings, and with eyes of faith look to You always that we serve You and others 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.

**People:** **Amen.**

(Please be seated)

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DAY**

Pastor: The Lent season is one of repentance and renewal, and today through God's Word we recognize the times of sinful darkness and spiritual blindness. Isaiah identifies the blindness that is not of the eyes but of the heart. Paul reminds us of the light that exposes our sin, but the greater call is to walk in the light of Christ. In the Holy Gospel, a man blind from birth is healed by Jesus but experiences an even greater sight of light away from the darkness of unbelief. In this season of Lent, even in times of darkness, we continue to follow Christ to the cross as we hear His Word and rejoice in His light of truth.

### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

Isaiah 42:14–21

(Amid the unbelief of His people, God will turn darkness to light.)

### **EPISTLE**

Ephesians 5:8–14

(Once in darkness, we are now children of light in the Lord.)

### **HYMN**

*"Imitators Be Ye"*

By Rev. John C. Stennfeld

Text: Ephesians 5:1-14

Tune: Wem in Leidenstagen

Imitators, be ye,  
Of God's love and grace,  
Loving just as Christ loved,  
The whole human race.

No immoral person  
Whose heart is impure  
Will inherit heaven;  
This you can be sure.

Once you were in darkness,  
Now you are in light;  
Live, therefore, as children  
Seeking to do right.

Stay away from darkness  
And its fruitless deeds;  
Shameful are its actions,  
And to death it leads.

Wake up, then, o sleeper,  
Follow Christ, your head;  
On you he will shine, and  
Raise you from the dead.

(Please rise)

**HOLY GOSPEL**

John 9:1-41  
(Jesus heals a man born blind.)

Pastor John

**CONFESSION OF FAITH – APOSTLES CREED**

Back Cover of LSB

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in Holy Spirit,  
The holy Christian Church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen.

(Please be seated)

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*“Amazing Grace”*

LSB #744

Amazing grace how sweet the sound That  
Saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but  
Now am found, Was blind but now I see!

The Lord has promised good to me, His  
Word my hope secures; He will my shield and  
Portion be As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I  
Have already come; His grace has brought me  
Safe thus far, His grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail And  
Mortal life shall cease, Amazing grace shall  
Then prevail In heaven's joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright  
Shining as the sun, We've no less days to  
Sing God's praise Than when we'd first begun.

## **SERMON**

### **"Imitators of God"**

(Text: Ephesians 5:1-14)

Rev. John C. Stennfeld

(Please **print** Attendance Sheet at this time, pass it down the pew & return to center aisle.)

## **OFFERING**

(Please rise)

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

### **THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST**

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

**People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

### **PAX DOMINI**

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

**People: Amen.**

### **AGNUS DEI**

p.198

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the  
World, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that  
Takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.  
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the  
World, gran us Thy peace. Amen.

(Please be seated)

## **DISTRIBUTION**

(Please rise)

## **POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Let us pray.

Gracious God, You entered the darkness of this world of blindness, sin, and death, and brought life and immortality to light through the forgiveness of our sins. Receive our thanks for the body and blood given and shed for us, that we always look to Your light of grace, that we live as Your children of light and as beacons to those around us who walk in darkness. Sustain us in hope and faith throughout our pilgrimage; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION**

### **CLOSING HYMN**

*“O God of God, O Light of Light”*

LSB #810

(v. 1 & 4)

O God of God, O Light of Light, O Prince of Peace and King of kings:  
To You in heaven's glory bright The song of Praise forever rings.  
To Him who sits upon the throne, The Lamb once slain but raised again,  
Be all the glory He has won, All thanks and praise! Amen, amen.

Then raise to Christ a mighty song, And shout His name, His mercies tell!  
Sing, heav'nly host, your praise prolong, And all on Earth, your anthem swell!  
All hail, O Lamb for sinners slain! Forever let the song ascend!  
Worth the Lamb, enthroned to reign, All glory, pow'r! Amen, amen.

(Please be seated)

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **POSTLUDE**

Organist