

He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Hebrews 5:9

# March 21, 2021 Fifth Sunday in Lent 9:30 AM Worship

First Lutheran Church 709 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. – P.O. Box 218 Washburn, North Dakota 58577 <u>www.flcwashburn.com</u>

## AS WE GATHER

(The ancient name for today, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, is Judica, the Latin behind "vindicate" in the Introit. This Sunday prepares us for next Sunday's review of the Passion. Only in Christ are we truly vindicated. But the emphasis is on our response to God's love and forgiveness. In today's Gospel, Jesus inverts the usual triangle of power into an upside-down pyramid of service. The greatest in God's kingdom, the position sought by His disciples in the Gospel, is now at the bottom, serving everyone above. Jesus is describing Himself! In contrast to priests who repeatedly pray for others and offer sacrifices also for their own sins. Jesus was a one-time priest. offering Himself as the sacrifice while being sinless. In this new covenant, promised in the Reading from Jeremiah, we know of our Lord's great love, now written in our hearts. From the inside out, our desire is to return Christ's sacrificial, forgiving love by serving one another in His name.)

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## INVOCATION

- C: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES Jeremiah 31:31, 33; Mark 10:43-44

- P: The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant.
- C: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.
- P: And I will be their God,
- C: and they shall be My people.
- P: Whoever would be great among you must be your servant,
- C: and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

#### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 5:9

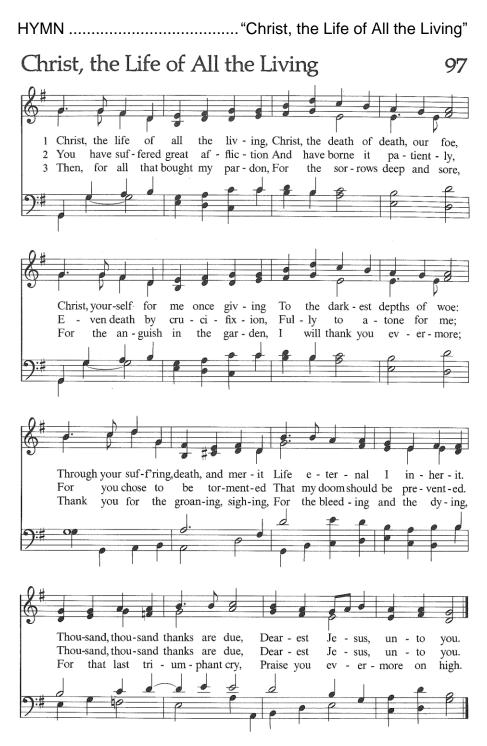
P: Bearing our sins and in need of a Savior, let us go to our heavenly Father, asking for forgiveness.

Time for reflection on the word of God and for personal examination.

- P: Most merciful, heavenly Father, You promised a covenant written on Your people's hearts.
- C: But we do not always rely on Your promises and great love. We are sorry.
- P: Gracious Holy Spirit, through Your use of Word and Sacrament, many people know the Lord.
- C: But we have not taken advantage of every opportunity to share Your Word with others. We are sorry.
- P: Jesus taught that the greatest in the Kingdom is the servant of all.
- C: But our hearts have not always been humble and eager for service. We are sorry.

Our thoughts, words, and deeds fall short. As fallen sinners, we are helpless to change. For Jesus' sake, forgive us, and give us new and clean hearts to love You and serve our neighbors.

- C: Amen.



Text: Ernst C. Homburg, 1605-1681; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1829-1878, alt. Tune: Das grosse Cantionale, Darmstadt, 1687

JESU, MEINES LEBENS LEBEN 87 87 88 77

#### KYRIE

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



- P: Let us pray:
- C: Almighty and merciful God, your Son's glory was revealed through humility and suffering. Keep us from the temptation to elevate ourselves and instead, through the power of your Spirit, help us to humbly share ourselves with others, for it is only in dying to our selfishness and pride that we will find life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING ......Jeremiah 31:31-34 (The great promise of the Scriptures is that a new covenant will be made with God's people. It will not be like the old commitments because the new covenant will not be able to be broken by people. This new pledge will be sealed with God's own blood (<u>1 Cor 11:25</u>). Therefore, the covenant will depend upon God alone. People will not nullify the new testament. The result will be (and has become) that God's law will be written upon their hearts so that their spirits will keep turning and moving toward God. They will know God personally and intimately because he will forgive their faults and forget their sins forever.)

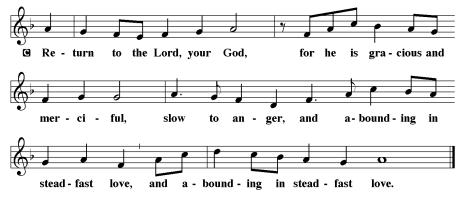
<sup>31</sup>{Thus says the Lord,} "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup>not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. <sup>33</sup>For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." PSALM (Read responsively) ......Psalm 119:9-16 (This is the greatest commandment: to seek the Lord and love him with one's entire heart and soul and mind (<u>Deut 6:5</u>; <u>Matt 22:36-37</u>). The psalmist tries to do so but seems aware that he could fail at his task. He implores, "Let me not wander from your commandments!" Who can love the Lord so completely? We all turn to the side from time to time (or more likely, very often) to seek our own interests. What else can we do but turn again to the Lord, fixing our attentions upon him and his ways? May we delight in his law and never forget his word.)

- <sup>9</sup> How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.
- <sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!
- <sup>11</sup> I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
- <sup>12</sup> Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes!
- <sup>13</sup> With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.
- <sup>14</sup> In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.
- <sup>15</sup> I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.
- <sup>16</sup> I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

<sup>1</sup>For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup>He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. <sup>3</sup>Because of

this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. <sup>4</sup>And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. <sup>5</sup>So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; <sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." <sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup>And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

RETURN TO THE LORD



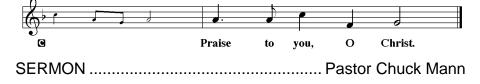
P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter.



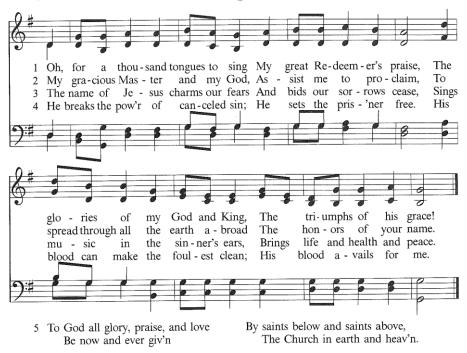
for us all.)

<sup>32</sup>{The disciples} were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, <sup>33</sup>saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. <sup>34</sup>And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise." <sup>35</sup>And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." <sup>36</sup>And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" <sup>37</sup>And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." <sup>38</sup>Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" <sup>39</sup>And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, <sup>40</sup>but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." <sup>41</sup>And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. <sup>42</sup>And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup>But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.



HYMN ...... "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing 559



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt. Tune: Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829 AZMON C M

### APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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

BLESSING OF EASTER EGG HUNT ITEMS

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

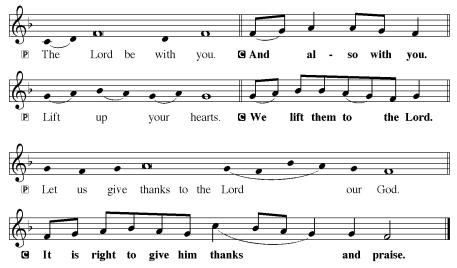
(Place your hand over your heart and turn to your neighbor sharing the peace in this manner. No hand shaking.) P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

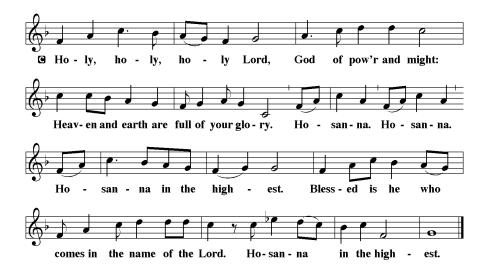
## OFFERTORY PRAYER (Said in unison)

God of love, you have provided for our every need from your abundant bounty. Grant us grateful hearts that we may give generously to those in need and thereby show your love to the world around us. Amen.

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, who did not leave Your will for us an external, condemning law, but placed it on our hearts so that by faith we might desire to serve You and our neighbors in love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:



P: We give thanks to You, heavenly Father, for in sending us Your Son to die and rise for us You not only gave us eternal salvation but revealed to us Your immeasurable love. Grant us Your Holy Spirit, Father, so that we might emulate our Savior's great love and service as we respond to Your grace and mercy. Strengthen us now through this Sacrament of His body and blood; grant that in true faith we receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation You so graciously bestow upon us here. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

 THE WORDS OF OUR LORD
 Matthew 26:26–28;

 Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✤ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My & blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST 1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20

- P: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
- P: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

#### 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, for ever and ever. Amen

#### COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

(Single Aisle Station – one side at a time, social distancing)

- P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
- C:Amen

#### POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

P: Blessed is the one who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

Go now, in the name of God the Father, the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

### C: Amen.

#### BENEDICTION Psalm 32:10

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

HYMN ...... On next page "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

DISMISSAL P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord! C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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<u>Today's Worship Leaders &amp; Volunteers – Thank You!</u>	
PASTOR	Pastor Chuck Mann
ACOLYTE	Maddie Jaeger
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Mac Beaudry
READER	Jeff Schmidt
ORGANIST	LeAnn Richard
USHERS/GREETERS	Rick & Matthew Richard
ALTAR GUILD	Janet Hanson & Theresa Petersen
SERVICE GROUP COORDINATO	DRS Rick & LeAnn Richard



Text: Elisha Hoffman, 1839–1929 Music: Anthony J. Showalter, 1858–1924 SHOWALTER 109 109 and refrain

### **Our Mission**

"Working hand in hand to know Christ and make Christ known through Worship, Christian Education, Evangelism, Fellowship, Caring Ministries, and Service."

#### Welcome to all who have come to worship.

Some people said to the disciple Philip, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus" (John 12:21). We are here because we too wish to see Jesus. Open your heart: Jesus is here. Welcome.

### Visitors

We welcome all visitors to First Lutheran today.

#### **Holy Communion**

All are welcome to receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Receive the bread into your open, flat palm. Ask if you wish to receive grape juice or a gluten free wafer. Alert an usher if you, or someone you know, needs communion served in the pew.

#### Nursery

The nursery, located beside the narthex, is available for use for any parent feeling the need to use it during worship services with their child.

#### Thank you for your giving

Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, Attendance – 85 Facebook Online Viewing – 94 General Fund & Plate Giving - \$470.00

Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, Attendance – 97 Facebook Online Viewing - 119 General Fund & Plate Giving - \$2,735.00

## **Pastoral Care**

**Please call Pastor Chuck** if you or a loved one are in the hospital or know you will be going to the hospital. The church does not usually get informed of your stay by any of the hospitals even if you are registered under our congregation's name. We want to make sure you get pastoral care. Thank you!

## **Prayer Requests**

Alice Richard, Mary Ann Monsebroten - Sister to Jackie Olson, Weldon Wagner – Brother to Arden Wagner, Cindy Thiel, George Sheldon, Haley Beaudry – Brother to Mac Beaudry, Kathy Solomonson, Mary Ann Beeks, Josiah Johnson - Brother to Steph Mann, Greg Merrill - Uncle to Steph Mann, Wayne & Cindy Vorland – Parents of Aaron Vorland, Shauntaye Kopecky - Kurle family member, Mary Schulz, Ross Lorentzen, Gwen DeMontigny, Kayla Boger – Family member of Steve & Peggy Wollmuth, Keith Hammerbeck – Family friend of the Kugler's, Deborah Davenport – Mother of Laura Gardner's friend, Virgie Emineth, Cindy Delmonico – Mother to Melissa Kugler, Glenn Weist, Ruby from Pine Ridge, Claire Boucher - Friends of Aaron & Lexie Solomonson newborn, Jamie Baumann, James Tolbert, Brad Taylor – Friend of Pastor Chuck, Taylor Gardner, Harold Holtz, Elaine Renfrow – Mother to Lynette Sondrol, Sandi Femling – Cousin to Melanie Beckman, Laren Holznagel, Harlow Tatum – Daughter to Brea (Gutknecht) Tatum, Ruth Lund – Mother to Doddie Kuntz, Derek Laning, John Krebsbach - Brother to Peggy Wollmuth, Arlo Omoth - Brother to Jeneen Loe, Bob Miller, Rodney Jaeger

## **Hearing Assist**

First Lutheran is in the process of getting a hearing assist system to be used during the worship services. If you feel you could benefit from this, please let Jeannette know in the church office so we have an idea of how many units to order.

## **Coffee Hour**

Reminder that coffee hour has returned. Coffee only will be served.

## FLCW Executive Board

FLCW Executive Board will meet today following the worship service.

#### **Office Hours**

Jeannette will be in the office this week Monday thru Thursday. She will be out of the office on Friday.

#### Lenten Meals & Worship

Join us this Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> for our Lenten meal. FLY will be serving baked potatoes and bars from 5:30 – 6:45 pm. Free-will offering. Money will be used for mission trip this summer. Join us after the meal for our Lenten Worship drama series, "How to be a Disciple: The Reflections of a Contemporary Twelve" at 7:00 pm with Thomas and Nathanael "On doubt, proof, and faith". Themes are: Seeing and believing.

## Quilting

Women! Please join us this Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 am for quilting, fun and fellowship. This is the only day we will be quilting this month.

### Movie Night Date Change

FLCW (First Lutheran Church Women) will host a MOVIE NIGHT this Thursday, March 25th, at 7 pm. The movie is "THE EGG AND I". Very family friendly. It is 1 hour and 28 minutes long and popcorn will be provided. Bring your own drink. We are inviting families to this movie as it is part of a series. Every age will enjoy. Be there or you'll miss fabulous popcorn and fun.

### Easter Breakfast

Looking for an organization or people willing to coordinate and serve the Easter Breakfast this year between the 7:00 am and 9:30 am worship services on Easter Sunday, April 4th. If no one comes forward it will be a regular coffee hour with coffee only. If interested, please talk to Jeannette ASAP!



#### Easter Egg Hunt

Volunteers are needed to help with the Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>. If interested in helping out, please talk to Laura Gardner ASAP!

#### Easter Basket

There is an easter basket in the narthex for donations to help offset the cost of the easter egg hunt. Thank you in advance for your donation!

## Easter Lilies

Forms for the Easter Lilies are on the table in the narthex and will also be in the April newsletter going out this week. Please purchase your lily, attached the form and bring it to the secretary's hallway no later than noon on April 1<sup>st</sup> to be included in the Easter bulletin.

## Christ in Our Home and Our Daily Bread

The April/May/June edition of *Christ in Our Home* and the March/April/May edition of *Our Daily Bread* are in the magazine racks in the narthex. Pick up a copy of each today to use with your daily devotions.

## Looking for Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers for the following:

- 1. People to serve on the Endowment Committee. If interested please talk to Matt Gardner.
- 2. Anyone interested in serving on the Evangelism Committee. If interested contact Melanie Beckman.
- 3. Preschool VBS director needed. You would be provided with curriculum and volunteers. We just need someone to organize the details. Dates and times are June 1-4 from 9:00-10:30.
- 4. Preschool VBS volunteers. This program is during the work day, so if you are available to help please let us know!
- 5. Elementary VBS. I am sad to report that Camp of the Cross will not be coming to do VBS this year. Thank you to Melissa Rothe for stepping up and taking charge. We will need music people, craft people, game people and more. Please contact me if you would be interested in hopping on board! Dates and times are June 1-4 from 6:00-8:30. Thanks in advance! Stacy Boeshans 701-240-8012

## **Thrivent Choice Dollars**

Thrivent members that have Thrivent Choice Dollars to direct to an organization, you have until March 31<sup>st</sup> to do that before you lose last year's dollars.

## LBW & WOV Hymnals

We will be ordering more LBW (green) and WOV (blue) hymnals. As of the printing of this bulletin we are looking at approximately 75 more LBW at a cost of \$32 per book and approximately 35 WOV at a cost of \$15.75 per book. If you would like to help purchase any of these hymnals please talk to Jeannette in the church office. We may have a chance to purchase some from another church but how many and price is yet to be determined. *LBW books on the cart in the narthex are free for the taking.* 

## Thank You

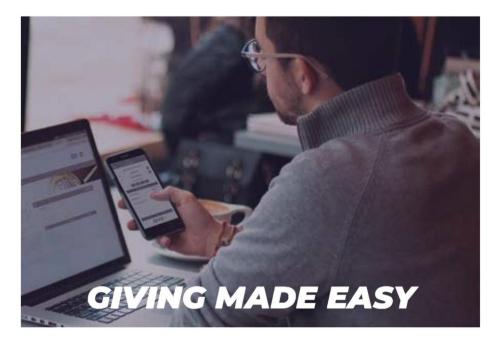
THANKS to the FLC Church Council, FLCW, Evangelism Committee, Men's Bible Study group, and an anonymous party, all registration fees will be covered for FLC campers to Camp of the Cross Ministries this summer. There is an early bird discount for registering with CCM by April 1, 2021. Please let Peggy Moran know by May 24, 2021, if you have campers registered so the funds can be sent to the camp before the camp season begins.

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

- ⇒ Class: We are looking at how many would be interested in a class to be scheduled in the future in learning how to knit or crochet. Please contact Jeannette and specify which you would like to learn and stay tuned for time/date TBA.
- ⇒ Distribution of Shawls: There will be a sheet located on top of the prayer shawl box. It will have a place for the name of the person taking the shawl, number of shawls being taken and the recipient. You do not need to fill out all of it, please at least fill out the number so we know how many shawls we have been able to provide. If you would like us to add the recipient to the prayer chain, please include the name.

## COMMUNITY AND AREA ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washburn United Methodist Church will be hosting a **Ladies' Night Out** on Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. Doors open at 5:30 pm. Christian Comedienne, Dorie McLemore will be your entertainment. Baked potato bar supper will be served at 6:00 pm. Dessert and socializing following the comedy. Join them for some laughs and door prizes.



Did you know we offer electronic giving? You can contribute anywhere, anytime right from your computer, smartphone or tablet.

- Give online by visiting our website at <u>www.flcwashburn.com</u> and clicking "Donate".
- Download our free GivePlus mobile app from the App Store or Google Play.

Get started today! Download our mobile app or visit online donations page to set up your online contribution.

Vanco



THIS WEEK AT FIRST LUTHERAN	
	Bible Study Led by Cathy Sheldon
	Worship w/Holy Communion Coffee/Fellowship Hour
	Sunday School
	Bible Study Led by Alexis Solomonson FLCW Executive Board Meeting
7.00 PIVI	AA Meeting Al-Anon Meeting
8:00 AM	Men's Bible Study
10:00 AM	Mommy's Group
9:30 AM	Friendship Bible Study
	Lenten Meal Served by FLY
	Bell Choir
	Lenten Worship Service
	FLY
7:45 PM	Choir
9:00 AM	Quilting
7:00 PM	Movie Night
1:00 PM	First Communion Class
6:00 PM	Marriage Course
	Palm Sunday
9:30 AM	Worship w/Holy Communion
10:30 AM	Coffee/Fellowship Hour
10:45 AM	Sunday School Bible Study Led by Alexis Solomonson
7:00 PM	AA Meeting
7:00 PM	Al-Anon Meeting
	8:30 AM 9:30 AM 10:30 AM 10:45 AM 7:00 PM 8:00 AM 10:00 AM 9:30 AM 6:45 PM 6:15 PM 7:45 PM 7:45 PM 7:45 PM 7:45 PM 9:00 AM 7:00 PM 1:00 PM 6:00 PM 9:30 AM 10:30 AM 10:30 AM 10:45 AM

# Listening for the Promise WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

#### March 21, 2021 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

#### "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant..." - Mark 10:43 -

Two of Jesus' followers approach him and say, "Lord, grant us to sit at your right and your left when you come into your kingdom." In other words, "Lord, when we get you elected Messiah, grant us positions in your cabinet." Jesus replies to this perfectly understandable request by saying, "You don't know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?" Of course, we know what the disciples don't. The road that Jesus walks will lead to suffering and sacrifice. The "cup" that he is about to drink is the cup of crucifixion. The "baptism" that will drown him is death on a cross.The disciples show that they are clueless when they respond, "Sure! We can do that! No problem!"

Like the first disciples, you and I show up in a similar way on a Sunday morning. Are you able to receive the peace, the benefits, the joy, the reassurance, or whatever it is that Jesus is handing out this week? "Sure, we're ready!" we answer. "But are you able to suffer, to be rejected and disappointed as I am about to be?" Jesus asks. Well, are you? Christ's small band of followers reply, "Absolutely!" Jesus responds, "You will drink the cup that I drink, you will be baptized with my baptism." The promise is NOT that they will share glory and happiness, and rewards with him. But that if they follow him, they will necessarily share his humility and sacrifice.

I've been thinking about that these days, as our congregations endure unprecedented challenges. Are we able to drink the cup of hardship and uncertainty as our Lord did? Are we able to be baptized into difficulty and trust God for the outcome? Are we able to persevere together, in order to emerge a better and stronger church? Be careful how you answer. When Jesus came into his glory, it was not on a throne. It was on a cross, with two thieves beside him. This is the message we Christians have been reluctant to proclaim to the world, because we are reluctant to hear it ourselves.

Jesus is not a technique for getting what we want from God. Jesus is God's way of getting what He wants from us! God wants a world redeemed and restored, a world where people fear, love, and trust him in equal measure. The way God gets that is with ordinary people like us who are willing to walk like Jesus, talk like Jesus, and yes, if need be, even suffer like Jesus.

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