

GATHERING

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

We come to God, looking for holy hope in the midst of the world's hopelessness.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

God of hope, **we confess that we often place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts, rather than relying on you. We make our own plans, instead of trusting the leading of your Spirit. We too often want to be in control, instead of having faith in your wisdom and love. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may bring your hope to everyone. Amen.**

Beloved of God, by divine mercy we have peace with God through Christ Jesus. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope, for hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Gathering Song "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" ELW 611 (Spoken)

1. I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting-place, and he has made me glad.
2. I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give
the living water, thirsty one; stoop down and drink and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.
3. I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk till trav'ling days are done.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889 Public Domain

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

Let us pray...**O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

WORD Reading: Romans 12:9-21

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.



Reading: Romans 12:9-21 (CONTINUED)

¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²¹From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Grace and peace, cross-bearers of the faith.

Over the years we've heard many times: "this is the cross I have to bear." What did Jesus mean when he encouraged us to take up our cross? Jesus told his friends he was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die. They probably didn't catch the part about being raised.

If someone dear to you told you that a week from Friday he was going to die, how would you react? Probably shocked. Wonder if he was going to take his own life. Talk him out of risky situations, suggest counseling, find someone to watch him until you were sure he wanted to keep living. That's how Peter reacted. "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." In other words: What are you talking about? We just figured out you ARE the Messiah. Messiahs don't DIE! They ride in and rescue people, kick invaders out, and rule in glory! What do you mean, you're going to Jerusalem to DIE? We won't allow that to happen!

That's why Jesus tells Peter, "Get away from me! You're tempting me to ignore my mission. If I listen to you, I won't do what God wants me to do. Go away!"

But in Peter's mind, a savior couldn't die— there was too much to do. There were lives to save, the dead to raise, lands to free, food to share, mercy to offer and so much more! How could all that happen if Jesus wasn't right there with them each and every day? But Jesus knew that dying and rising again could be better than our ideas of what life should be like.



Our vision may be too narrow, too. Peter couldn't imagine what Jesus planned to do. Life taught him to be cautious, to plan carefully for tomorrow because what could happen might throw your plans way off. Peter's plan included a living Jesus, not a dead one. How could Jesus' death be good for anyone? Then Jesus says that Peter must take up his cross and follow him. Peter didn't want to hear that. Jesus tells Peter— and us— to take up our cross and follow him.

What is this cross Jesus asks us to carry? It isn't a chronic disease or fatal illness. Not the death of a loved one. Not an abusive relationship. Not living through a natural disaster. Not addiction or depression, not homelessness or hunger. They are not the cross Jesus calls us to bear.

The Apostle Paul tells us about the cross we are to bear. Turn to today's reading from Romans and follow along— this is the cross we must bear. [read Romans 12:9-21]

Can you bear that cross? I can't. That cross is too much for any of us to carry in this life. No way I can do all those good things and avoid the bad. I'll try, but I'll fail, I just know it.

Taking up our cross means doing the will of God, even if it's painful, even if it goes against what we would prefer. It means trusting that God's plan is better than our own plan— even if we think God's plan seems risky, even if we don't completely understand it.

I've carried my cross... when I've forgiven others when they haven't forgiven me; when I put the needs of others before my comfort; when I follow God's lead even when it will be hard.

Jesus accepted his cross to save us and all creation. The cross of Jesus blesses others, but it meant he would suffer to accomplish God's plan. Jesus has done the life-giving part by dying and rising FOR US. We can never be good enough to deserve that, but Jesus did it for us anyway. That's what we mean by "the grace of God." Even though we fail, Jesus still chose to die for us.

Now God's plan for continuing the work of Jesus rests with us. In gratitude for the priceless gift of eternal life, we can offer our lives to continue Christ's ministry— to love all, hate evil, serve the Lord; to not give up in hard times, to pray, to share generously, to return good for evil; to trust God and treat others with understanding.

We can't do this alone. But the Holy Spirit walks with each of us every day, giving us the strength to do that. The Spirit reminds us of the ultimate goal we all have— trusting the Lord and living eternally in his presence with all the saints.

Know that you are not alone in bearing your cross. Christ goes with you, and we stand with each other. Amen

Apostles' Creed

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.

Zion, Prentice & Westboro—Skip to Prayers of Intercession

Ogema—Quilt Blessing (Also printed on insert/slideshow)

L: Gracious God, as we bless these Quilts, we recognize the unity of all your people in the body of Christ. **We celebrate being the children of God.**

L: We give thanks for the variety of gifts that compose these Quilts: donations of fabric, thread and sewing machines, the faithful people who cut the squares, design the patterns, sew the tops, iron the fabric, make backs and fillers, tie and stitch the bindings, provide publicity, donate boxes, pack the Quilts, bring food to sustain the quilters and contribute the money for shipping these Quilts. **We celebrate generosity.**

L: We give thanks for the fellowship of all who work together to make the Quilts, the laughter, the shared stories, the joy of crafting something with one's hands and heart for another and the time to reflect and wonder about the recipient. **We celebrate community.**

L: We send these Quilts as a sign of God's love and blessing for each person who receives one, trusting that their Quilt will be a source of comfort and hope in the midst of disaster and fear, a symbol of Christ's love to those who suffer, a reminder that each recipient is a beloved child of God.

We pray that these Quilts will serve a useful purpose in the life of the recipient; that they will bring warmth in the cold, shelter from the sun and heat, a wall for a home, or a carrier for a few precious belongings. May it be a step in recovering one's life and a message of care from someone they may never meet. **We celebrate hope in the midst of life's trials.**

L: We remember those who have received our Quilts in the past and pray that their lives have returned to stability.

We celebrate the gift of life.

L: We ask that you bless the fruits of our labor and the whole mission of Lutheran World Relief, that together we may minister to our neighbors in need.

Bless all who give and all who receive, as we are sewn together in the unity of your Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

L: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

L: God of faithfulness, you bid your people to follow Jesus. Grant us trust in you, that we lose our lives for the sake of Christ and thereby discover joy in life through him. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#1. God of wonder, the earth is yours and all that is in it. As the seasons change, pattern the rhythm of our lives in harmony with your creation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#2. God of all nations, you call us to live peaceably with all. Give us ears to hear one another, even those we name as enemies. Fill all leaders with mercy and understanding, so they genuinely care for those who are most vulnerable in their communities. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#3. God of community, you call us to rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. Make our congregations and parish a workshop of your love. When we disagree, bring reconciliation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#4. God of hope, give good courage to all the people of Northwoods STaR Ministries, that we may go wherever you call us, to be the people you created us to be. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



L: God of salvation, you promise to deliver us. Give those who suffer a strong sense of your presence and love. Be with those who are anxious, raise the spirits of those who are despairing, and heal the sick. We especially pray for all those on the prayer list — Leo, Mary, Scott, Florence, Betty, Arland, Phil & Janice, Dorothy, Ben M., Evelina, Renee, Kay, _____ and all those we name before you now, out loud or in our hearts. *(pause)* Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
(Other prayers added here)

L: In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HEALING

Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing— with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing.

I invite you now to name silently before God whatever you are asking healing for during this moment of silence.

Let us pray. By your power, great God, our Lord Jesus healed the sick and gave new hope to the hopeless. Though we cannot command your power, we pray for those who want to be healed. Mend their wounds, soothe fevered brows, and make broken people whole again. Help us welcome every healing as a sign that, though death is against us, you are for us, and have promised renewed and risen life in our + Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

MEAL

Offering

The offering plates will be placed near the sanctuary entrances. Please place your offerings there as you exit the worship service today. Thank you for your faithful support.

Offering prayer

Let us pray...**God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also 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.

Blessed are you, Lord of life, creator of heaven and earth. Through his death on the cross, your Son Jesus Christ has broken the power of evil, and by his resurrection has opened for us the gate to eternal life. Through him you seek the lost, restoring those whose lives have been shattered and torn apart. In the fullness of time, he will gather all things to himself, enfolding us and all who have died in his undying love.

The Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

Friends of Jesus, come to the table.

Receive nourishment for your journey.

COMMUNION

Post-Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

God of the welcome table, in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. **Amen.**

SENDING

Announcements

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn— "You Are Mine" ELW 581

1. I will come to you in the silence, I will lift you from all your fear. You will hear my voice, I claim you as my choice. Be still and know I am here."

2. "I am hope for all who are hopeless, I am eyes for all who long to see. In the shadows of the night, I will be your light. Come and rest in me."

Refrain: "Do not be afraid, I am with you. I have called you each by name. Come and follow me, I will bring you home; I love you and you are mine."

3. "I am strength for all the despairing, healing for the ones who dwell in shame. All the blind will see, the lame will all run free, and all will know my name." Refrain

4. "I am the Word that leads all to freedom, I am the peace the world cannot give. I will call your name, embracing all your pain. Stand up, now walk and live!" Refrain

Text: David Haas, b. 1957 Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #709391-A

Mission Statements

Northwoods STaR Ministries

"United in Christ, Sharing God's Love"

Zion Brantwood

"We are disciples of Christ: Growing in faith, sharing our faith stories, serving others."

First Prentice

"We are Jesus' disciples: Welcoming every sinner, sharing Jesus' love and teachings, encouraging all to live Christ-centered lives."

First Ogema

"We are called and gathered to share Christ as we minister to all, bringing an unchanging God to a changing world."

First Westboro

"Feeding bodies, minds and spirits through Christ."

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**