

Third Wednesday of Lent

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church

February 28, 2024

6:30pm.



AS WE GATHER

These Gardens look different, even if they are one of the seven ancient wonders. They don't feel like home, in fact they remind us how far from home we really are. How far from You we really have strayed. Yet, even in Babylon, You plant us as Your people. You tell us we are not abandoned. You tell us that You have not forgotten us. You tell us that all things happen in Your ways, and at Your time, even the things that feel like oppression, the things that feel like pain, You are working for our Good. We might not see it yet, but this is not the last garden. Babylon is not where our stories end. So as you continue to till the soil of our lives, planting in us the faith to one day rise again, help us to see these times of physical, emotional, even mental exile as just a place where we spend a season or two, a place where we can even plant and proclaim the truth of who you are.

PRELUDE

“Garden” -Kip Fox

PASTORAL WELCOME

THEME VERSE

People: ⁴ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. (Jeremiah 29:4-5)

OPENING PRAYER

Pastor: God of love, plant us in the soil of your grace. Nurture us with the strength of Christ, and till our hearts and minds when we don't feel your presence. Prune us of our self-centered thoughts and help us to see our story as a part of your story. Enlighten us with the wisdom of your Spirit, which flows through us today and all days. Abide in us, that we may abide in you and live in your love, no matter the situations and places you have planted us in. In your holy name, we pray.

People: **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness” **LSB #809, St. 2**

1 Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father; There is no shadow of turning with Thee. Thou changest not: Thy compassions, they fail not; As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be. Refrain

**Refrain: Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!**

2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above Join with all nature in manifold witness To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. Refrain

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! Refrain

Please Rise

INVOCATION

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

People: **Amen.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Inspired by Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7)

Pastor: A word of encouragement came from prophet to people;

People: **Live a life that is full – build, plant, eat, love, multiply –**

Pastor: Pray for your communities

People: **Keep God in the center of all that is.**

Pastor: We enter into worship today with the hope that God will not leave us feeling abandoned, exiled, alone or forsaken

People: **For something happens here, in this place. Something that reminds us that God will never leave us nor forsake us.**

Pastor: God has made a promise of be faithfulness to us even in gardens of exile.

People: **In His word, we see all the times He has been faithful before and we know we can trust His promises.**

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: As we continue to walk through the gardens of Scripture, tonight we find ourselves in a distant land, exiled. We find ourselves feeling the weight of being sojourners in a home not our own.

People: **Most Merciful God, it can be difficult for us to see that the future You have planned for us is good. So often we**

get caught up in the here and now. We find ourselves planted in places and in situations we never wanted, we never imagined for ourselves. We confess that often we feel overwhelmed and disorientated. We don't want to face the hardships we face. We wonder why you allow these things to happen. In our frustration, in our anger, and in our despair, we question if you are good. We question if you are loving. We question if you are able to change our situation. We no longer see how you have us exactly where we need to be, going through the things you need us to go through. We don't see how these things we might be for our good and for the good of your kingdom. Give us eyes to see those realities you see, and a faith to know that even in the gardens that feel foreign or wrong to us, your hands are still tilling the soil.

Pastor: Even when hope seems lost, keep listening to God, for He has a good, gracious and merciful plan for our lives with a hope-filled future. He will fulfill His promise to you. He will bring you to the place He has prepared. He knows the plans He has for us all, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give us a future and a hope. That hope is born in Christ and that future is won not in the Gardens of Babylon, But in the Garden of Golgotha. Our Sins, our Doubts, our frustrations with God, they are all known and they are all forgiven at the cross in the name of the Father and the † Son and the Holy Spirit. The Place prepared is a garden full of life, and our life as exiles will end with us at rest and at Home.

People: Amen.

HYMN OF FORGIVENESS

"Jesus Sinners Doth Receive" **LSB #609, St. 2**

2 We deserve but grief and shame, Yet His words, rich grace revealing, Pardon, peace, and life proclaim; Here our ills have

perfect healing. Firmly in these words believe: Jesus sinners doth receive.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Almighty God, across the ages you have guided your people through the wilderness, assuring us of a home in that final garden, your eternal city. Strengthen us along the way, that we might not neglect our call to serve the cities and plant ourselves and our church firmly in the towns where we live. Help us to trust in your unfailing presence amid all of our fears. Grant us wisdom to discern your way in this world even as we hope for the next.

People: Amen.

Please Be Seated

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Jeremiah 29:4-14

⁴“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ⁸For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, ⁹for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

¹⁰“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will

hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE READING

1 John 2:7-17

⁷ Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. ⁸ At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹ Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

¹² I am writing to you, little children,
because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

¹⁴ I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC "The Old Rugged Cross" -George Bennard

Stand

LENTEN REFRAIN: **LSB 173**

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

GOSPEL READING ***Luke 13:31-35***

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the thirteenth chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Lament over Jerusalem

³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." ³² And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.' ³³ Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.' ³⁴ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to Thee, O Christ.

APOSTLES CREED

People: 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 the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life † everlasting.
Amen.**

HYMN OF THE DAY:

"Here in This Place (Gather Us In)- WOV #718, St. 1-4

- 1 Here in this place new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken
Gather us in, the blind and the lame
Call to us now and we shall awaken
We shall arise at the sound of our name.**
- 2 We are the young, our lives are a mystery,
we are the old who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of history,**

called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

3 Here we will take the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth,
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

4 Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away
here in this place the new light is shining,
now is the kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever,
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bones.

SERMON

“In Unfamiliar Soil”

Jeremiah 29:4-14

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Go To Dark Gethsemane” LSB 436, V. 1

People: Go to dark Gethsemane, You who feel the tempter's
power; Your Redeemer's conflict see; Watch with Him
one bitter hour; Turn not from His griefs away; Learn of
Jesus Christ to pray.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH:

Pastor: God of grace, in the story of creation, you made the earth a garden and entrusted it to us to till and to keep, a place of peace and beauty where we could walk with you. In the story of redemption, the one who died for us was buried in a garden, and there you raised him up to greet us with new hope and risen life. In the story of the Church, you tend us as a garden, a place of careful pruning and abundant harvest. Meet us, we pray, in all the gardens where we go for nourishment, refreshment and prayer. Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: Almighty Father, Since the Garden of Eden, You call to us saying, "Where are you?" Yet, since the Garden, we humans have often been hiding in shame. Help us to stop hiding and bring our sins into the light. Help us to see how we have been deceived by half-truths and false promises. May temptation be bitter in our mouths as you lead us away from forbidden fruits that would only bring us the curse of pain and death. Take away our sin and restore our relationship with you. Lord, In Your Mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: Bless the garden of your Church, O God. Guide those who plant and tend it. Protect the young, strengthen the flourishing, and make us faithful stewards in the labor of planting and cultivating, planning and protecting, and offering to you the return. Make us fruitful in ministry and mission. Lord, in Your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: Bless the gardens of our community, the shelter of families, the fragrance of friendship. In all our care for one another, make us grow in wisdom and love, in gentleness, kindness and truth. Lord, in Your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: Give tender care to all who are struggling through weakness, sickness, grief or change. Show us your grace at work in the times when growth is painful or when death is near. Especially this day we ask you to be with all those on our prayer list, and those we name in our hearts (____).
Lord, in Your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: Heavenly Father, there are many who have been uprooted, replanted by flood and fire, war and famine. Help us to care for them. May they find kindness in the church on their journey. May we help lead them to a safe place, to find comfort under the shelter of your wings. Lord, in Your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: For those who have experienced loss – of homes, jobs, good health, and of loved ones. May they find your love and the light of your promises to be enough for the next step. Lead them to a place of hope, to find glimpses of joy in their journey. Bind up their wounds tenderly – and fill them again with your goodness and mercy. Lord, in Your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: For those who are walking in a distant land and have wandered far from you – who feel forsaken, forgotten, or fearful. May they find that you are not so far off after all. May they trust in your prodigal love, and run into your outstretched arms with joy. Lord, in Your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer

Pastor: Lord God, since you have called us and received us as your disciples, give us the grace to abide in him as fruitful branches, and bring us at last with all your saints to resurrection life. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and forever.

People: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**People: 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.**

BENEDICTION

**Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face
shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon
you with favor and † give you peace.**

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" LSB #892, St. 1-4

- 1 Come, ye thankful people, come; Raise the song of harvest
home. All be safely gathered in Ere the winter storms begin;
God, our maker, doth provide For our wants to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple, come; Raise the song of harvest
home.**
- 2 All the world is God's own field, Fruit unto His praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown, Unto joy or sorrow grown.
First the blade and then the ear, Then the full corn shall appear.
Lord of harvest, grant that we Wholesome grain and pure may
be.**
- 3 For the Lord, our God, shall come And shall take His harvest**

**home, From His field shall in that day All offenses purge away,
Give His angels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast,
But the fruitful ears to store In His garner evermore.**

- 4 Even so, Lord, quickly come To Thy final harvest home;
Gather Thou Thy people in, Free from sorrow, free from sin,
There, forever purified, In Thy garner to abide: Come with all
Thine angels, come, Raise the glorious harvest home.**

POSTLUDE

"Lead Me, Guide Me" -Doris Akers

SERVING US AT WORSHIP

Officiant Preacher: Pastor Tim Anderson

Organist /Dir. of Music: Ellen Brown

Song Leader: Marshann Donahue

Lector: Bobbie Littou

Special Music: The Beautiful Savior Singers

Pianist: Glenn Brown