

We are cleansed and saved by God's grace, not our own ability (inability) to follow God's laws. The early Christian church had a debate that brought the concept of grace to the surface. It would be God's gifts, not people's adherence to the laws, that would cleanse and save.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

God's salvation is for all!

All lands and all peoples.

No separation will stand

Between us and our sisters and brothers.

Let us praise the Lord of love,

Whose grace has redeemed us all.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

Risen Lord,

We admit that we are slow to believe, and even slower to follow where you lead us. We doubt your promise, divide your people, and fail to proclaim the power of your resurrection. We choose to live small lives when you have given us the biggest gift of all: your eternal life. Forgive us. Raise us up to a place where we can serve you faithfully.

Christ is arisen, bringing gifts of life, mercy and pardon for sin! Believe that you are forgiven, and go out and live in the joy of your Lord's resurrection in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Amen.

SONG (596) *My Hope is Built on Nothing less*

**1 My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
no merit of my own I claim,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

- 2 When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
in ev'ry high and stormy gale
my anchor holds within the veil.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

- 3 His oath, his covenant, his blood
sustain me in the raging flood;
when all supports are washed away,
he then is all my hope and stay.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

- 4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,
oh, may I then in him be found,
clothed in his righteousness alone,
redeemed to stand before the throne!**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving God,

You showed your followers that their salvation didn't depend upon culture or traditions, but on the grace freely offered by your Spirit. Show us the same open vision of mercy offered to all, regardless of background or practice, for the sake of the whole world. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

LESSON Acts 15:1-18 Council at Jerusalem

15Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with

the apostles and the elders. 3So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers.

4When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

5But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.”

6The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. 7After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. 8And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; 9and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. 10Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” 12The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. 13After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. 14Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. 15This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written, 16‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, 17so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things 18known from long ago.’”

GOSPEL Luke 2:29-32

29“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; 30for my eyes have seen your salvation, 31which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

MESSAGE

SONG (779) Amazing Grace

1 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.**

**2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**

**3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**

**4 The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.**

**5 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.**

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

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

You helped changed the minds of the early disciples, guiding them towards grace and away from legalism. Likewise keep us focused on your wide mercy and inclusion of all, instead of the trivial things that would serve to keep us divided. God of all, **Hear our prayer.**

As our Orthodox brothers and sisters celebrate the festival of Easter, revive our own joy at the news of your resurrection and fill us with the gladness of your promises. God of all, **Hear our prayer.**

You have made every one of us unique, and we each have something to bring to the body of Christ. Help us recognize and value our particular contributions and the things which make us different and important. God of all, **Hear our prayer.**

Unlock fixed minds and entrenched beliefs which focus on separation and keeping those with whom we differ at a distance. Show us the healing that needs to take place so that we can embrace all of ourselves, and thus embrace others. Send your Spirit's presence to those in need, especially Kaitlynn, Jenny, Bob, Horst, Crystal, Doris, Jim, Cheryl, Michel family, Edla, Leah, Grosso family, Richard, John, Joan, Brooke, Jeff, Art, Gerald, Beverly, Virginia, Jason, Jeremy, Nette, Denise, Marlowe, Ron, Judy, Hazel, Carol and Jane. God of all, **Hear our prayer.**

Be with all your congregations as we strive to be your light in the world where there is so much darkness. We especially lift up Zion Lutheran Church, Lake Crystal; Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Faribault; Moland Lutheran Church, Kenyon; Nuer Sudanese Worshipping Community in Owatonna; Kisonga Lutheran Church, Tanzania; Light and Life Ministry, Colombia. God of all, **Hear our prayer.**

We honor Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria and all who stand firm in their beliefs so that your gospel can be proclaimed. Give us the conviction of our forebears in faith. God of all, **Hear our prayer.**

Incline your ear to our prayers and fill us with power to begin living out our faith, by the power of your Son our savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

MEAL

You gather all to your table, even when we keep some out. You welcome all to your supper even when we limit the guest list. Your grace and mercy are enough for all; now let us come at our savior's invitation.

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

When we give of ourselves, you prosper our hearts. Receive and bless these gifts and use them and us for the ongoing work of your merciful kingdom, for the sake of Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION / LORD'S PRAYER

The Body and Blood of Jesus Is Given and Shed for Us

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Wellspring of joy,
through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.
Satisfy the hunger still around us,
and send us as joyful witnesses,
that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BLESSING

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.

The God of life,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SONG (638) *Blessed Assurance*

**1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.**

**This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long:
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.**

**2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. Refrain**

**This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long:
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.**

**3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love.**

**This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long:
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.**

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

SENDING MUSIC

Thank You!

Your continued financial support is so appreciated. Please continue to mail in, drop off or donate on-line as you are able. Together we can get through this! **The Finance Team**

To help us defray office expenses, please let us know if you are attending in-person worship and receiving the bulletin. We want to mail the bulletin to only those who are staying home due to Covid. Please call the church office and let us know. Thank You