

MIDWEEK OF LENT 3

LIGHT SHINING IN THE DARKNESS

MARCH 15TH, 2023

AS WE GATHER

“Let there be light,” God said (Genesis 1:3). And there was light. Through the promised treasure of His Word, God keeps speaking to us. And because He does, there is light. Light from above! Light never-ending! Light that enlightens our way to life everlasting! Jesus Christ is this “light of the world” (John 8:12), the light no darkness can overcome. By His Word and Spirit, this light breaks through again today, enters our lives, and enables us to shine brightly for Him.

HYMN

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

2 Corinthians 5:21, alt.; Isaiah 53:5

P For our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin,
C **so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.**
P But He was wounded for our transgressions;
C **He was crushed for our iniquities;**
P upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
C **and with His stripes we are healed.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Based on Philipians 2:1–11

P Lord Jesus, search our hearts and minds that we may receive Your Word, share in Your Spirit, and be renewed in our relationships with You and with one another.

We observe a moment of silence for personal prayers of confession.

P With humble hearts, let us pray together:

- C Lord Jesus, the Father's only Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords, hear us as we pray.**
- P Darkness seeks to overtake us and rob us of the light, distracting us from Your never-failing presence in our lives.
- C Our rebellion against You in thought, word, and action is why You died for us—**
- P to forgive our sins, to redeem our lives, and to cancel the debt we owe to God.
- C With hearts that are humble and lives ever grateful, help us to receive Your grace, bow before You in worship, and confess that You alone are Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**
- P Almighty God our heavenly Father shows His mercy to us in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, the true light of the world who scatters the darkness of our sin and shines upon us the bright beams of His mercy. The almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all our sins.
- C Amen.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

- P Let us pray.
Lord Jesus Christ, You are the light of the world, and no amount of darkness in our world can overcome Your presence shining in our lives.
- C Renew our hearts and minds during this Lenten season as we receive the promised treasures of Your Word;**
- P for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.**

FIRST READING

Genesis 1:1–5

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the

darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 27:1–4, 13–14

P The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

C **The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

P When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

C **Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.**

P One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,

C **to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.**

P I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living!

C **Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 5:1–2, 8–14

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. . . .

⁸For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it

becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE

Joel 2:13b

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

HOLY GOSPEL

John 8:12–18

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹²Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” ¹³So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are bearing witness about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.” ¹⁴Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent Me. ¹⁷In your Law it is written that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸I am the one who bears witness about Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness about Me.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SERMON

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Create in Me"

PRAYER

- P Gracious God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You for blessing us with the opportunity to meditate again on the cross of Christ and receive Your promised treasures.
- C **Grant that the message of the Lamb of God slain for our salvation bring us the riches of Your pardon and peace.**
- P Lead us to see that our sins caused Jesus' great agony in the garden, that our sins nailed Him to the cross of Calvary,
- C **that He was forsaken by His Father so that we might never be forsaken, and that He died so that we may live.**
- P Lord Jesus, grant that especially during this sacred season the treasured story of Your wondrous love for us would draw us closer to You.
- C **Enable us to walk in the light of Your grace, knowing that You are truly the light of the world that darkness can never overcome.**
- P Holy Spirit, lift up troubled souls everywhere. Grant wholeness to those hurting in heart, body, and mind. Work Your healing power in the lives of those in need, [*especially . . .*], and in the lives of all we name before You in our hearts.
- C **All glory, honor, and praise be to You, with the Father and the Son, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

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,
forever and ever. Amen.**

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

BENEDICTION

**P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.
C Amen.**

HYMN "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" LPH 45 v 1 & 4