

**March 3rd, 2013
Third Sunday in Lent**



BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

21590 State Highway 47, Isle, MN 56342

Phone: 320-684-2123 (1-877-684-2123) Fax: 320-684-2836

E-mail address: blcmalmo@frontiernet.net

Church Web Site: blcmalmo.org

Pastor: Rev. James Raisanen

Church Secretary: Evelyn Richter

Parish Nurses: Darlene Christensen, RN, C 320-684-2846

Patti Honnold, RN CNP 320-676-8421

Kathy Berland RN ANP 320-495-3988

Ministers: All Members of the Congregation

MISSION STATEMENT

We will grow spiritually and in numbers as we serve Christ. We will reach out and address the hurts and hopes in our community. We will maintain a church home that is reverently joyous and extend a welcome to all who seek to join us in our mission.

Hearing Assistance is available during the service.

Please notify usher if you would like assistance

Sunday, March 3, 2013/Third Sunday in Lent

Holy Communion

INTRODUCTION

The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Lent is a season of repentance. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN: "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" # 325 ELW

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Amen.

WE CONFESS OUR DARKNESS: God of light, we confess we have lived in darkness for too long. We play games in the shadows, not wanting our true nature to be exposed. We live through nights of fear and frustration and turn away from the forgiving light of your love. God of light, shine brightly on us today and forgive the sin which separates us from you.

THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S LIGHT: Our God is a great God whose light is shining brightly in our world today. In Jesus Christ we are given life and light to overcome the darkness. The light of Christ illuminates every darkened corner—and to those who receive him, who believe in his name—he gives power to become children of God.

Amen.

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.

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

CHOIR ANTHEM:

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:1-9

To those who have experienced long years in exile, the return to their homeland is a celebration of abundant life. God calls them into an everlasting covenant of love. Those who return to the Lord will enjoy new life and forgiveness, because God's ways are not our ways.

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

PSALM: Psalm 63:1–8

Refrain: O God, eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you. (Ps. 63:1)

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.**

For your steadfast love is better than life itself; my lips shall give you praise.

So will I bless you as long as I live and lift up my hands in your name. R

My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the night watches.

For you have been my helper, and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

My whole being clings to you; your right hand holds me fast. R

GOSPEL: Luke 13:1–9

Asked about current tragic events, Jesus turns a lesson about whether suffering is deserved into a hard call to obedience. He then tells a parable that holds out hope that the timeline for ultimate judgment will be tempered by patience.

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

HYMN:

"Lamb of God"

336 ELW

SERMON

OFFERING & OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Returning to the Lord with all our heart, let us pray for the whole people of God, the earth, and all who cry out for healing.

A time for silent prayer.

Cultivate in the church a spirit of repentance, that we may bear the fruits of faith, mercy, and compassion. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Turn the nations from violence and bloodshed to genuine concern for the common good, and care for the earth we inhabit. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Bless our Jewish sisters and brothers, fellow heirs of God's promises, even as we confess to them our sins and past failures. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Nurture the faith of those tested by illness, grief, addiction, or anxiety (*especially*) and give them a spirit of endurance. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Sustain us in our Lenten journey with spiritual food and drink, that we may bring forth the fruit of conversion. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be made.

Gather us around the tree of life in the garden of paradise with all our holy ancestors who trusted in your covenant of mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Hear us according to your steadfast love, O God, and in your great compassion bring us to resurrection and rebirth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

APOSTLE'S 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 into hell. 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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you his peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

CLOSING HYMN:

"Ah, Holy Jesus"

349 ELW

Vs.1, 2 & 5

THOSE SERVING THIS WEEK OF MARCH 3RD.

Organist: Marlys Beavers
Greeters: Shirley Moe, Judy Seifert
Ushers: 8:30 Jack & Paula Spetz, 10:00 Darrell Kelly, Dick Stebbins
Lectors: 8:30 Kathy Carlson, 10:00 Carol Bakken
Coffee Servers: Chuck & Elsa Carlson, Joyce Rimer

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD LAST WEEK (2/24/13)

Attendance: 9:00 – 141

Offering: \$ 2,142.00 Building Fund: \$ 170.00

\$ 3,077.00—Weekly amount needed for operating expenses.

\$ 580.00—Weekly amount (building fund) needed for mortgage payment.

THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA MARCH 3RD THRU MARCH 9TH, 2013

Mon., Mar. 4 th	7:00 p.m.	AA & Alanon
Tues., Mar. 5 th	9:00-Noon	Fellowship Hall in use for DNR Forestry
	9:30 p.m.	Bells
Wed., Mar. 6 th	8:30 a.m.	Bible Study
	9:30 a.m.	Hardanger
	11:00 a.m.	Bible Study
	5:30 p.m.	Potluck
	6:30 p.m.	Lenten Service
Thurs., Mar. 7 th	8:00 a.m.	R.O.M.E.O.S.
	10:00 a.m.	Altar Care
	1:00 p.m.	Funtimers

Everyone is invited to the **Community Breakfast** at Aicota Health Care Center today from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Quilt & Ham Bingo, Sun., Mar. 10th at 1 p.m., Immanuel Lutheran Church Hillman.

Women's Retreat, Sat. Mar. 13th at Glory Baptist Church. Please register.

Augsburg Choir performing in Onamia March 23 at Church of the Holy Cross and March 24 at Bethany Lutheran Church.

REMINDER: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS NEXT WEEKEND

SPIRITUAL MANURE

A traditional approach to this parable of the unproductive fig tree might see God as the impatient vineyard owner and Jesus as the gardener who pleads the case for the poor little tree. But everything in scripture proclaims that God pursues us, going so far as to take on human flesh and walk among us. That doesn't sound like a God who gives up after only three years of waiting for fruit.

What if the triune God is the gardener, and the person who wants to rip out the fig tree instead represents us? We are often quick to give up on our hopes and dreams. That voice in our head that tells us how worthless we are sounds awfully close to the voice that threatens to uproot and cast away the barren tree.

This parable gives us a hopeful view of our spiritual lives. We tend to think of plants as always growing, always producing. We forget that for any growth to take place, a period of fallowness is necessary.

Once the fallow period is over, this parable shows us a path to bloom anew. The gardener pledges to give the fig tree extra attention, digging around it to fertilize its soil. We, too, can be open to the gardener's ministrations. And that doesn't have to mean going to extreme measures; we don't have to run off and join a religious commune. Just a little spiritual manure is all it takes.

We've got a wide variety of spiritual practices at our disposal, any one of which could nourish our withered fig tree lives: prayer, scripture study, weekly worship, communion, fellowship with other Christians. What might be the fertilizer your spiritual life needs right now?

God comes to show us a different way: a gentle and patient way to grow. We don't have to uproot ourselves. We just need to open ourselves to the cultivation and care of God the gardener.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2013 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26493.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.