

Sunday, March 21, 2021

Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year B

Introduction

God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.

Order of Service

Today in a non-communion Sunday led in person by Pr Joe Varsanyi. It’s a third Sunday, so there is a children’s meditation. The prayers today are prayers of praise for the blessings of God even in this year of difficulty as we mark a year of the pandemic, created out of the prayers offered by the people in worship at Grace on 3/7/21.

Prayer of the Day

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Readings

[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

A new covenant written on the heart

[John 12:20-33](#)

The grain of wheat dying in the earth

Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the

covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

A The Word of the Lord.
C **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Gospel: John 12:20-33

Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover festival. Here Jesus’ words about seeds planted in the ground turn the disaster of his death into the promise of a harvest in which everyone will be gathered.

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Prayers of Blessing, Lent V

When I say, “Bless we the LORD,” you respond,
“THANKS BE TO GOD.”

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence is kept as we gather our prayers.

Eternal God, you watch over all that you have made, the earth and all that is in it, the wide stretches of the universe and all that we can imagine. We pause to thank you for the ways you watch over us, as well, and our loved ones, family and friends:

Bless we the LORD:
THANKS BE TO GOD!

O LORD: You provide everything we need!
Humbly we thank you for waking us up this morning, alive and well. We thank you for the health and safety of our families and friends. Even with restrictions, we are so grateful to have the ability to worship with our own Grace congregation.
Bless we the LORD:
THANKS BE TO GOD!

Almighty God, we thank you for an abundance of the everyday,
for things we have often passed over without much notice:
Time with our families
Time with each other
Time with our children
Home cooked meals and time together at meals
Friends at Grace
New life at Grace
For these and all your gifts of grace:
Bless we the LORD:
THANKS BE TO GOD!

Gracious God, we praise you for the gift of your Church in this time, calling us ever beyond the small circle of our own lives, reminding us that our own safety and connection is made possible by others who extend themselves for us:
Health care workers
Other front-line workers who had no choice
about working at home
Leaders able to lead rooted in strength and faith,
not fear
Bless we the LORD:
THANKS BE TO GOD!

We thank you for the community you call us to be together in your Church:
for the privilege and satisfaction of working with purpose together to serve others;
for the honor of sharing our bread
(and peanut butter and jelly!);
for the joy of watching someone rise above their own
day to day to care for other people:
Bless we the LORD:
THANKS BE TO GOD!

We praise you, O LORD God, that safe and effective vaccines were able to be developed;
for Operation “Warp Speed;”
and now for all who work to distribute vaccines fairly:
Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD!

Almighty God: You promise to write your law on our hearts
that you shall be known in all the earth.

We thank you for the ways that you have caused us to stretch and grow, even through
difficulty, over the past year.

We thank you for your guiding hand showing us how to strengthen our ties with family
and friends, how to find new strength in quiet times at home, how to relax and slow down
without guilt, how to imagine new possibilities, new work as the world opens up. We
thank you for new opportunities,
as we witness them among our loved ones.

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD!

Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death.

We thank you, O God, for the gifts of grace that come from the practices of faith:

Resiliency

Hope

Community

Courage

Quiet Moments

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD!

For the witness of loved ones lost, that we might always remember those who have
passed from us.

For all who grieve, for those whose grief is compounded by isolation, that they may
discover the solace of your presence:

We ask this and all things through Jesus our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

God bless you ✝ that you may be a blessing,
in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg
Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS025662.

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.

Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.