Midweek Lenten Service
MARCH 13, 2024

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Serbin, Texas
EMPTY WORDS
You are daily assailed by empty words: idle small talk, advertising slogans, and news reports that play on your fears. Political and business leaders spew cant, clichés, and spin. Perhaps even your friends and family get in on the act, betraying you with flattery and falsehoods. King David was only too familiar with such afflictions: “When one comes to see me,” he said, “he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad” (Psalm 41:6). Our Lord’s powerful Word was David’s refuge from vain and malicious talk. It is your refuge too. In Baptism, Jesus Christ has lifted you out of the verbal cesspool and placed you firmly on the rock of His Word. That Word is never empty, but it shall accomplish that which He purposes for you.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Stand

OPENING SENTENCES

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord.

Glorify 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.

Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.

PSALM

All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD,
and all Your saints shall bless You!
They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and tell of Your power,
C to make known to the children of man Your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of Your
kingdom.

P Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

C The LORD is faithful in all His words and kind in all His works.

PSALM

P Blessed is the one who considers the poor!

C In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;

P the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land;

C You do not give him up to the will of his enemies.

P The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.

C As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against You!”

P My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?”

C And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he
goes out, he tells it abroad.

P All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me.

C They say, “A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies.”

P Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

C But You, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them!

P By this I know that You delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.

C But You have upheld me because of my integrity and set me in Your presence forever.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

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.

Sit

HYMN: ♫“A LAMB GOES UNCOMPLAINING FORTH”

1 A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,
   The guilt of sinners bearing
   And, laden with the sins of earth,
   None else the burden sharing;
   Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,
   To slaughter led without complaint,
   That spotless life to offer,
   He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,
   The mockery, and yet replies,
   “All this I gladly suffer.”
This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great friend,
The Lamb of God, our Savior,
Whom God the Father chose to send
To gain for us His favor.
“Go forth, My Son,” the Father said,
“And free My children from their dread
Of guilt and condemnation.
The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
But by Your passion they will share
The fruit of Your salvation.”

“Yes, Father, yes, most willingly
I’ll bear what You command Me.
My will conforms to Your decree,
I’ll do what You have asked Me.”
O wondrous Love, what have You done!
The Father offers up His Son,
Desiring our salvation.
O Love, how strong You are to save!
You lay the One into the grave
Who built the earth’s foundation.

Lord, when Your glory I shall see
And taste Your kingdom’s pleasure,
Your blood my royal robe shall be,
My joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before Your throne,
Your righteousness shall be my crown;
With these I need not hide me.
And there, in garments richly wrought,
As Your own bride shall we be brought
To stand in joy beside You.

Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005097

READING

PSALM 52:1–9

A reading from Psalms, the fifty-second chapter.

Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man? The steadfast love of God endures all the day. Your tongue plots destruction, like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit. You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking what is right. You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. But God will break you down forever; He will snatch and tear you from your tent; He will uproot you from the land of the living. The righteous shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying, “See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!” But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. I will thank You forever, because You have done it. I will wait for Your name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

Thanks be to God.
NOT MANY OF YOU SHOULD BECOME TEACHERS, MY BROTHERS, FOR YOU KNOW THAT WE WHO TEACH WILL BE JUDGED WITH GREATER STRICTNESS. FOR WE ALL STUMBLE IN MANY WAYS, AND IF ANYONE DOES NOT STUMBLE IN WHAT HE SAYS, HE IS A PERFECT MAN, ABLE ALSO TO BRIDLE HIS WHOLE BODY. IF WE PUT BITS INTO THE MOUTHS OF HORSES SO THAT THEY OBEY US, WE GUIDE THEIR WHOLE BODIES AS WELL. LOOK AT THE SHIPS ALSO: THOUGH THEY ARE SO LARGE AND ARE DRIVEN BY STRONG WINDS, THEY ARE GUIDED BY A VERY SMALL RUDDER WHEREVER THE WILL OF THE PILOT DIRECTS. SO ALSO THE TONGUE IS A SMALL MEMBER, YET IT BOASTS OF GREAT THINGS.

HOW GREAT A FOREST IS SET ABLAZE BY SUCH A SMALL FIRE! AND THE TONGUE IS A FIRE, A WORLD OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. THE TONGUE IS SET AMONG OUR MEMBERS, STAINING THE WHOLE BODY, SETTING ON FIRE THE ENTIRE COURSE OF LIFE, AND SET ON FIRE BY HELL. FOR EVERY KIND OF BEAST AND BIRD, OF REPTILE AND SEA CREATURE, CAN BE TAMED AND HAS BEEN TAMED BY MANKIND, BUT NO HUMAN BEING CAN TAM E THE TONGUE. IT IS A RESTLESS EVI L, FULL OF DEADLY POISON. WITH IT WE BLESS OUR LORD AND FATHER, AND WITH IT WE CURSE PEOPLE WHO ARE MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD. FROM THE SAME MOUTH COME BLESSING AND CURSING. MY BROTHERS, THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT TO BE SO.

O LORD, HAVE MERCY ON US.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

A READING FROM JAMES, THE THIRD CHAPTER.

JAMES 3:1–10

A READING FROM JAMES, THE THIRD CHAPTER.

NOT MANY OF YOU SHOULD BECOME TEACHERS, MY BROTHERS, FOR YOU KNOW THAT WE WHO TEACH WILL BE JUDGED WITH GREATER STRICTNESS. FOR WE ALL STUMBLE IN MANY WAYS, AND IF ANYONE DOES NOT STUMBLE IN WHAT HE SAYS, HE IS A PERFECT MAN, ABLE ALSO TO BRIDLE HIS WHOLE BODY. IF WE PUT BITS INTO THE MOUTHS OF HORSES SO THAT THEY OBEY US, WE GUIDE THEIR WHOLE BODIES AS WELL. LOOK AT THE SHIPS ALSO: THOUGH THEY ARE SO LARGE AND ARE DRIVEN BY STRONG WINDS, THEY ARE GUIDED BY A VERY SMALL RUDDER WHEREVER THE WILL OF THE PILOT DIRECTS. SO ALSO THE TONGUE IS A SMALL MEMBER, YET IT BOASTS OF GREAT THINGS.

HOW GREAT A FOREST IS SET ABLAZE BY SUCH A SMALL FIRE! AND THE TONGUE IS A FIRE, A WORLD OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. THE TONGUE IS SET AMONG OUR MEMBERS, STAINING THE WHOLE BODY, SETTING ON FIRE THE ENTIRE COURSE OF LIFE, AND SET ON FIRE BY HELL. FOR EVERY KIND OF BEAST AND BIRD, OF REPTILE AND SEA CREATURE, CAN BE TAMED AND HAS BEEN TAMED BY MANKIND, BUT NO HUMAN BEING CAN TAM E THE TONGUE. IT IS A RESTLESS EVI L, FULL OF DEADLY POISON. WITH IT WE BLESS OUR LORD AND FATHER, AND WITH IT WE CURSE PEOPLE WHO ARE MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD. FROM THE SAME MOUTH COME BLESSING AND CURSING. MY BROTHERS, THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT TO BE SO.

O LORD, HAVE MERCY ON US.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

A READING FROM ST. MATTHEW, THE TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTER.

MATTHEW 26:57–62


O LORD, HAVE MERCY ON US.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

A LENT RESPONSORY FROM LSB 231

VERSE

1 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

2 In You, O Lord, do I put my trust; leave me not, O Lord, my God.

3 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

REFRAIN

Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.

STAND
HYMN: ♫”IN SILENT PAIN THE ETERNAL SON”

1 In silent pain the eternal Son
   Hangs derelict and still;
   In darkened day His work is done,
   Fulfilled, His Father’s will.
   Uplifted for the world to see
   He hangs in strangest victory,
   For in His body on the tree
   He carries all our ill.

2 He died that we might die to sin
   And live for righteousness;
   The earth is stained to make us clean
   And bring us into peace.
   For peace He came and met its cost;
   He gave Himself to save the lost;
   He loved us to the uttermost
   And paid for our release.

3 For strife He came to bring a sword,
   The truth to end all lies;
   To rule in us, our patient Lord,
   Until all evil dies:
   For in His hand He holds the stars,
   His voice shall speak to end our wars,
   And those who love Him see His scars
   And look into His eyes.


SERMON: “EMPTY WORDS”

By Pastor John Schmidt

Stand

P The Grace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts in Christ Jesus.
C Amen

ANTIPHON

Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
HYMN: “MY SOUL REJOICES”  

1 My soul rejoices,  
   My spirit voices—  
   Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
   For God my Savior  
   Has shown me favor—  
   Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
   With praise and blessing,  
   Join in confessing  
   God, who is solely  
   Mighty and holy—  
   O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
   His mercy surely  
   Shall rest securely  
   On all who fear Him,  
   Love and revere Him—  
   O sing the greatness of the Lord!

2 His arm now baring,  
   His strength declaring—  
   Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
   The proud He scatters,  
   Their rule He shatters—  
   Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
   Oppression halted;  
   The meek exalted.  
   Full are the hungry;  
   Empty, the wealthy—  
   O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
   Here is the token  
   All that was spoken  
   To Abr’ham’s offspring  
   God is fulfilling—  
   O sing the greatness of God the Lord!


SIT

OFFERING

As the offering is brought forth the congregation stands and sings.

OFFERING HYMN: “WE GIVE THEE BUT THINE OWN”  

1 We give Thee but Thine own, Whate’er the gift may be;  
   All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.
May we Thy bounties thus As stewards true receive
And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our firstfruits give!

Text: William W. How, 1823–97 Text: Public domain

KYRIE

\[ \text{Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.} \]

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.

COLLECTS

O Lord, hear my prayer.
And let my cry come to You.
O pitying Lord Jesus, grant us of Your gentleness and forbearance, of Your compassion and love, and of Your tenderheartedness, that filled with Your grace we may always find fitting and salutary words to speak and willingly forgive the wrongs and evils done us. This we ask in Your precious and mighty name.
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.
O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.
BENEDICTION

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

CLOSING HYMN: ♫“IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY”

1 In the cross of Christ I glory,
   Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time.
   All the light of sacred story
   Gathers round its head sublime.

2 When the woes of life o’ertake me,
   Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
   Never shall the cross forsake me;
   Lo, it glows with peace and joy.

3 When the sun of bliss is beaming
   Light and love upon my way,
   From the cross the radiance streaming
   Adds more luster to the day.

4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure
   By the cross are sanctified;
   Peace is there that knows no measure,
   Joys that through all time abide.

Text: Public domain

SILENT PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENTS