



SOTC Worship  
March 14, 2021  
Fourth Sunday of Lent

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## GATHERING

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PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*Time for silent reflection and confession.*

God of love,

**We forget the beginning of the story— that we were made from love, to be love, to give love. Instead of rooting our narrative in the goodness of creation, we skip ahead and find our worth at the fall, with Cain and Abel, lost in the wilderness. We forget that first there was you, and you are love. We forget that out of that love you created us. We forget that from the very first day, you loved first. We forget, because a love like that doesn't make sense to us.**

**Forgive our low self-esteem. Forgive our resistance to love ourselves. Forgive our hesitation to trust that even we could be made good. And forgive our tendency to pass that doubt on—from generation to generation. Write a new beginning for us that roots our confidence in your unrelenting love. With hope we pray, again and again. Amen.**

Family of faith, no matter what we do, where we go, or what we tell ourselves, the good news of Jesus Christ never changes, but tells us *again and again*: God is love. And because of that truth, your sin is forgiven in the name of + Jesus Christ. So go, and live in the care of the one who has loved you first.  
**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 FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST READING: NUMBERS 21:4-9

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” <sup>6</sup>Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

PSALM: PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22

<sup>1</sup>O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
**<sup>2</sup>Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,  
those he redeemed from trouble  
<sup>3</sup>and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.**  
<sup>17</sup>Some were sick through their sinful ways,  
and because of their iniquities endured affliction;  
**<sup>18</sup>they loathed any kind of food,  
and they drew near to the gates of death.**  
<sup>19</sup>Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress;  
**<sup>20</sup>he sent out his word and healed them,  
and delivered them from destruction.**  
<sup>21</sup>Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,  
for his wonderful works to humankind.  
**<sup>22</sup>And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,  
and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.**

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 2:1-10

<sup>1</sup>You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup>All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show

the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL: JOHN 3:1-21

The Holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

<sup>11</sup>Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup>Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

The Gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you O Christ**

SERMON

C Dm'

1 My Lord, what love is this that  
 2 And so they watched him die, de -  
 3 And now this love of Christ shall

Gsus G Csus C G C

pays so dear - ly, that I, the  
 spised, re - ject - ed; but, oh, the  
 flow like riv - ers; come, wash your

Dm<sup>7</sup> F/G G C

guilt - y one, may go free?  
 blood he shed flowed for me.  
 guilt a - way, live a - gain.

Refrain

A - maz - ing love, oh, what sac - ri - fice, the Son of God giv'n for

Chords: Gm7, C, Eb

me; my debt he pays and my death he dies, that

Chords: G, Gm7, C

I might live, that I might live.

Chords: Gm7, C, Gm7, C

Text and music: Graham Kendrick  
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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Response to "Lord in your mercy" is "hear our prayer." If you would like to add a prayer petition, email it to Pastor Aleese at [pastor@shepherdofthecross.org](mailto:pastor@shepherdofthecross.org)*

## MEAL

### GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

### COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

*Congregation is invited to share communion elements with those in their family, saying "The body of Christ, given for you," and "the blood of Christ, shed for you." If you are worshipping on your own, hear the words proclaimed by Pastor Aleese as God's Word of promise is spoken to you. All are welcome to share in God's feast given to us in love.*

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

## SENDING

### BLESSING

As you leave this space,  
may your mouth speak of God's goodness;  
may your arms hold those in need;  
may your feet walk toward justice;  
may your heart trust its worth;  
may your soul dance in God's grace;  
and may this be your rhythm –  
again and again and again...  
until God's promised day.

In the name of + Jesus Christ: the Beloved, and Love itself:  
go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.

**Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you!**

Liturgy and words for worship adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC  
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