



**OUR
GREATEST
NEEDS**

Life For the Dead

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

March 26, 2023

SERIES THEME: OUR GREATEST NEEDS

What do you really need right now? To answer that question, one must first define what a “need” is. We understand that a “need” is greater than a “want.” If you lack something you want, life goes on just fine. If you lack something you need, that presents a problem. Thus, to correctly answer that question, “What do you really need right now,” ultimately one must understand their greatest problems. Mankind’s greatest problems are universal. We all live under the curse of sin. That sin makes us utterly helpless in our natural state. Natural man is confused, unable to make sense of life. Left in sin, man is doomed to death, and not just physical death. After one’s heart stops comes another type of death that is infinitely worse, an eternal nightmare. Lent is the season of the Church Year where we wrestle with our greatest needs. Lent also demonstrates that in Christ, all our greatest needs are met. Here is what the Spirit makes clear this season. If you lack Christ, you have nothing. If you have Christ, you have everything you truly need.

THEME OF THE DAY: LIFE FOR THE DEAD

The author and poet George Eliot once wrote, “Our dead are never dead to us, until we have forgotten them.” The Roman philosopher Cicero said much the same. He wrote, “The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living.” What second rate comfort! But that is the best the unbelieving world can offer—the sappy sentiment that our dead loved ones somehow “live on” in our memories. It is a sad way to attempt to cope as you walk through the cemetery. Jesus provides a better solution to death. He promises life. One day Jesus will give your faithful dead back to you—to love and to laugh and to hug and to dance. Body and soul, living and walking in the new heaven and the new earth. How do we know Jesus can and will keep that promise? Because the Son of God descended into the darkness of death himself and emerged on Easter Sunday as the first fruit of the resurrection of all God’s people. In the creed we confess, “I believe in the resurrection of the body.” Yet again, Jesus satisfies our greatest needs.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Karma Ridpath

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 846 I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name

Stand

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

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Eternal God and Father, help us to remember Jesus, who obeyed your will and bore the cross for our salvation, that through his anguish, pain, and death we may receive the forgiveness of sins, victory over the grave, and finally inherit eternal life; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

God wants us to know that whoever believes in him will live, even though he dies. He enables the prophet Elisha to prove that to a grieving mother.

¹⁷ But the woman conceived, and she gave birth to a son at that same time of year, just as Elisha said to her. ¹⁸ The boy grew up, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. ¹⁹ Then he said to his father, "My head! My head!"

His father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." ²⁰ So he picked him up and carried him to his mother, and the boy sat on her lap until noon. Then he died.

²¹ Then she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God. She shut the door behind her and went out. ²² Then she called to her husband and said, "Send one of the servants to me with one of the donkeys, so that I can run to the man of God and come back."

²³ He said, "Why are you going to him today? It's not the new moon, and it's not the Sabbath." But she said, "It's all right."

²⁴ Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Lead the way. Don't slow down for me unless I tell you."

²⁵ So she went to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her from a distance, he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look! That's the woman from Shunem! ²⁶ Now run to meet her and say, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your son all right?'"

She answered, "We're all right."

²⁷ Then she came to the man of God at the mountain, and she grasped his feet. Gehazi stepped forward to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone, for her soul is in distress, but the Lord has hidden it from me. He has not told me."

²⁸ Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn't I say, 'Don't give me false hope?'"

²⁹ Then Elisha said to Gehazi, "Hike up your garments for travel,^[a] and take my staff in your hand and go! If you meet someone, do not greet him, and if someone greets you, do not answer. Put my staff on the boy's face."

³⁰ But the boy's mother said, "As surely as the Lord lives and your soul lives, I will not leave you." So he got up and followed her. ³¹ Gehazi went ahead of them and put the staff on the boy's face. But there was no sound, and there was no response. So he went back to Elisha and told him, "The boy did not wake up."

³² When Elisha came to the house, there the boy was—dead, lying on his bed. ³³ So he went in and he shut the door behind the two of them. Then he prayed to the Lord. ³⁴ He got up and lay down on top of the boy. He put his mouth to the boy's mouth, his eyes to the boy's eyes, his palms to the boy's palms. Then he bent down over him, and the boy's flesh became warm. ³⁵ He went back into the house and paced back and forth. Then he went up and bent down over him, and the boy sneezed seven times. Then the boy opened his eyes.

³⁶ Then Elisha called Gehazi and said, "Call the woman of Shunem!" So he called her, and she came in. He said, "Pick up your son." ³⁷ So she came in and fell at Elisha's feet and bowed down to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Romans 8:11–19

The Father promises to raise his children from the dead and make them heirs of everlasting glory.

¹¹ And if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his Spirit, who is dwelling in you.

¹² So then, brothers, we do not owe it to the sinful flesh to live in harmony with it. ¹³ For if you live in harmony with the sinful flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ Indeed, those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery so that you are afraid again, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we call out, "Abba, Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself joins our spirit in testifying that we are God's children.

¹⁷ Now if we are children, we are also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, since we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸ For I conclude that our sufferings at the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ In fact, creation is waiting with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed.

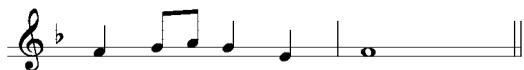
The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

John 11:25



Refrain



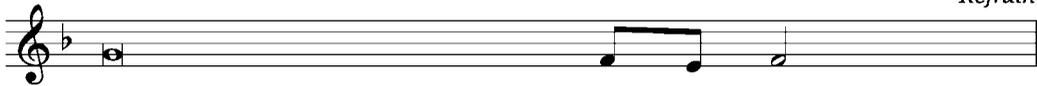
Glo - ry, praise, and hon - or to you, Lord Je - sus Christ.

Tone



I am the resurrection and the life.

Refrain



Those who believe in me will live, even though they die.

Tune: © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 713578

Gospel

John 11:17–27,38–45

A corpse responds to the empowering command of Christ. This greatest miracle of his ministry proves that Jesus is the Lord of life.

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary was sitting in the house.

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha replied, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the Last Day."

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even if he dies. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in me will never perish. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I believe [□](#) that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

³⁸ Jesus was deeply moved again as he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said.

Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, because it has been four days."

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone.

Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

⁴⁴ The man who had died came out with his feet and his hands bound with strips of linen and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus told them, "Loose him and let him go." ⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 571 O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth

Sermon

Stand

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

We confess that without your love we are lost.

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those

victimized by war and injustice. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Hear us as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 836 I Walk in Danger All the Way

sts. 1, 6

THE SACRAMENT

Stand

Preface

CW 165

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

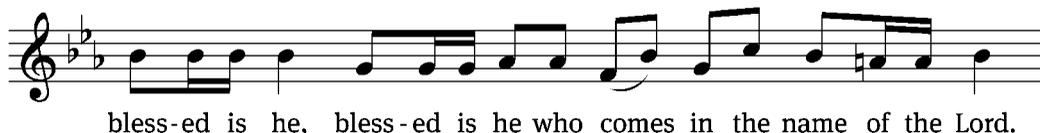
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 167



Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, 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.**

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

CW 169

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - men.

Be seated

Distribution

Close Communion We ask that only those who have previously spoken to our pastor or are members in good standing of this or another WELS or ELS congregation come to Holy Communion today. Our practice of Close Communion (which has been the practice of the Christian Church throughout the ages) is in no way trying to judge anyone's faith. What we are trying to do is follow the Bible's clear teaching (1 Corinthians 11) to first study God's Word together. As we do so, we can share with/review with you what the Lord's Supper is all about. You, then, also have an opportunity to examine what we believe and teach before you come to the Lord's Supper and make a public profession that you agree with what we teach.

Distribution Hymn: 665 What Is This Bread

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 423 The Power of the Cross

Choir Verse 1, Congregation Verses 2-4

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Thursday: 6:30 PM Mid-Week Lent Service

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Council Meeting

Grace's next council meeting will be on April 2nd at 7:00 PM.

Mid-Week Lent Services

Mid-week Lent services will be on Thursdays at 6:30 PM. There is a sheet at the entry of the church to sign up for the main dish following our mid-week Lenten services.

Care Center Bags

The Care Center Bags from the Grace Ladies will be on the kitchen counter on February 26th. They will be delivered by the Grace Ladies on April 2nd for Easter.

Holy Week Services

Maunder Thursday worship service will be at Bethel on April 6th at 6:30 PM.

Good Friday worship service will be here at Grace on April 7th at 6:30 PM.

Easter Sunday we will follow our usual Sunday service times at Grace and Bethel.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.graceseward.org on the member connect tab or scan this code.



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gracelutheranseward



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class 11, Sunday School 5, Worship 32 in person, Facebook Reached 118, Audio/YouTube 8. Offerings: Home 1,595.00, WELS 385.00, NELHS 30.00, Trinity 1,575.00, Christian Aid and Rel. 50.00 **To God be the glory!**