

Lent 4

March 30, 2025

Fourth Sunday in Lent (Year C)

Forgiveness is an incredible gift and is not something to take lightly. To forgive is to let go of all anger, hatred, and pain and offer a new reality where it is undeserved. This new reality is one of joy and freedom for the recipient *and* the giver and is demonstrated most clearly in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. God desires a relationship with us and offers us a new reality through this gift.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Lesson: Isaiah 12:1-6**God is My Salvation**

The prophet Isaiah reminded the Israelites that God is their strength, salvation, and song. Thus they are give thanks and praise, singing joyfully to the Lord who sustains them.

Psalm 32**Blessed are the Forgiven**

This psalm tells of sinfulness, confession, contrition, and repentance all of which end in the gift of God's forgiveness. The mercy and forgiveness bestowed upon the psalmist (and us) is regarded as blessing. In the face of our confessed iniquity, God offers his goodness and steadfast love. In response we rejoice and give him praise.

Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**Ambassadors Who Share the Message**

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth reminding them that they have been baptized into Christ and have been "made new" all through God's reconciling work in Christ. Having received the ministry of reconciliation we have also been entrusted with the message of God's reconciling work.

Gospel Lesson: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32**Parable of the Prodigal Son**

Jesus responded to criticism from the religious authorities concerning his practice of consorting with sinners by telling a parable which illustrates the magnitude of God's forgiveness and joy when a sinner repents and "comes home" to God. The parable of a father whose wayward son returns home groveling in shame and remorse and is greeted by a delighted father shows very clearly God's love for us.

Suggestions for the Sunday:

- The liturgical color is purple.
- The Kyrie may be used in Lent.
- Use the Apostles' Creed.
- This Sunday marks the half-way point in the Lenten Season. From the Latin it is called "Laetare" Sunday from a word that means rejoice. Easter is coming into sight as the long season of Lent makes its way to a close. There is still the difficult and painful Holy Week ahead, but we know the rest of the story and can rejoice even still.
- Consider inviting someone who has a personal story about being a "prodigal son" (or daughter) to speak about their experience of God's grace in their lives.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing	499	---	686	807	227	227
Your Heart, O God is Grieved	96	---	945	602	---	---
What Has Our God Required of Us?	---	---	---	---	---	web
Just As I Am, Without One Plea	296	---	570	592	193	193
Precious Lord, Take My Hand	---	731	739	773	206	206
Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling	---	734	---	608	177	177
God Loved the World	292	---	571	323	---	---
Amazing Grace	448	---	744	779	199	199
What Wondrous Love is This	385	---	543	666	254	254
Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence	198	---	621	490	80	80

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW = Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV = With One Voice, ELW = Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB = The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC = The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home, and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at "Hymns and Music."

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles
Holy Spirit (CCLI# 6087919)
Lord I'm Coming Home (CCLI# 78842)
Revelation Song (CCLI# 4447960)
Isaiah 12 (CCLI# 3359059)
I Will Call Upon the Lord (CCLI# 11263)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.