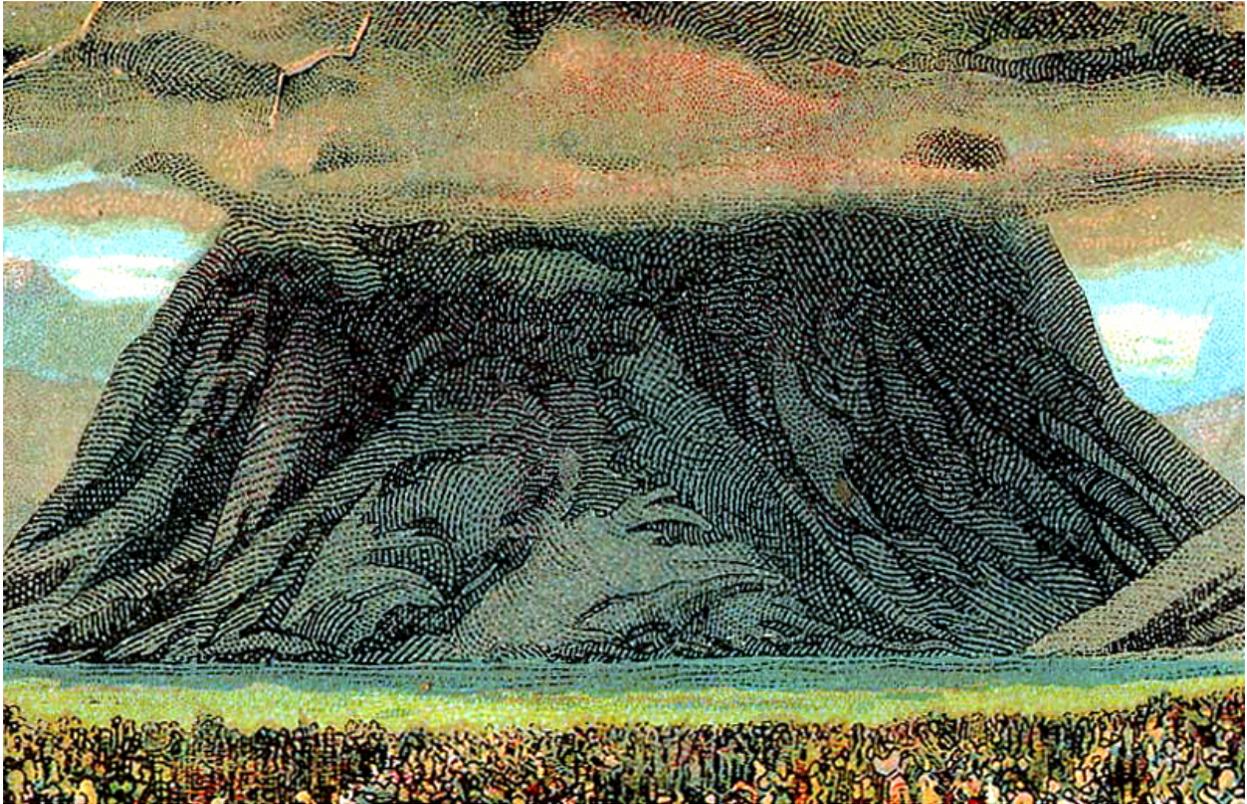


Gifts of the Dark Wood



Sunday, March 7, 2021

Third Sunday in Lent

First Lutheran Church - Sandpoint

“The Gift of Being Thunderstruck”

Welcome to the season of Lent. This year, our worship will invite us to examine and explore what God might be offering us in the wilderness places of our lives. Before Jesus begins his ministry, the Holy Spirit drives him out to the desert; a time of emptiness, uncertainty, temptation, feeling lost, and prayer. You are invited to explore what the Holy Spirit wants to help you discover in this time of worship. The cross looms before us as Jesus leads us along this path we might not choose for ourselves. Gifts await you along the way.

WE GATHER

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude

Welcome/Announcements

Please review page 12 of this bulletin for Covid-19 safety protocols in support of our worship together today.

Threshold to the Dark Woods

[Soloist sings]

*There's a path... though it winds its way through darkness
We would choose... to avoid it if we could
We awake... to an unexpected calling
God says, "come... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"*

Pastor: Ancient civilizations and religions all metaphorically describe the voice of the divine coming through thunder and lightning. We often describe experiences of insight as a "sudden flash," "seeing the light" or "rocked my world." Storms of life can make way for moments of insight, like the sun radiating in a clearing in the woods, offering direction, helping us to negotiate life's path and see our unique place in the world. As our Lenten journey continues through the Dark Wood, may your senses be opened to being thunderstruck by God's Word today.

...

[soloist sings— people whisper the echo]

*There's a path (echo: **there's a path**) ... though it winds its way through darkness
We would choose (**we would choose**) ... to avoid it if we could
We awake (**we awake**) ... to an unexpected calling
God says, "come (**God says, "come**) ... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"*

Prayer

Let us Pray,

Awe-some Love, enter our lives

and open us to the gifts residing deep within the Holy Darkness of our lives.

Form us as expectant people,

watching for your presence among us

that comes through quiet intuition or thunderous “a-ha’s.”

In your many names, we pray. Amen.

*Opening Hymn/Song:

(ELW 533, v 1,2, & 5)

(quietly hum or whisper)

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



- 1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
- 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;
- 3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;
- 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick-en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;
- 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.
where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.
let my soul, where it is plant-ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,
how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick-en, may thy word still o'er me shine
may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.



Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!
so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.
as my guid-ing star through life, as my com-fort in all strife.
Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672–1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: UNSER HERRSCHER, Joachim Neander, 1650–1680

Steve - ***Litany of Confession and Forgiveness**

Leader: For being too busy to be wonder-struck by Your works,

People: Forgive and restore us, O God.

Leader: For filling the holes in our spirit with things that cannot truly feed us,

People: Forgive and restore us, O God.

Leader: For denying the world our best selves,

People: Forgive and restore us, O God.

Silent prayers...

Hear these words of assurance:

God is already making a wonder of you.

You are a part of this awesome creation.

God is with you, forgiving and restoring you to wholeheartedness

Through the grace of Jesus Christ, who poured out His love, so you might live.

Thanks be to God! Amen!

WORD

FIRST READING: Job 37:1-5

¹"At this also my heart trembles,
and leaps out of its place.

²Listen, listen to the thunder of his voice
and the rumbling that comes from his mouth.

³Under the whole heaven he lets it loose,
and his lightning to the corners of the earth.

⁴After it his voice roars;
he thunders with his majestic voice
and he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard.

⁵God thunders wondrously with his voice;
he does great things that we cannot comprehend.

The Word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God!**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

The word of the cross is pure foolishness and nonsense to the world because it claims that God is mostly revealed in weakness, humiliation, and death. But through such divine foolishness and weakness, God is working to save us. The center of Paul's preaching is Christ crucified.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: (spoken)**

**Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.
Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.**

***GOSPEL: John 2:13-22**

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus attacks the commercialization of religion by driving merchants out of the temple. When challenged, he responds mysteriously, with the first prediction of his own death and resurrection. In the midst of a seemingly stable religious center, Jesus suggests that the center itself has changed.

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!” ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was

written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”¹⁸ The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?”¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”²⁰ The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?”²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body.²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

SERMON

WE RESPOND

A Time for Reflection

Leader [*from preacher at end of sermon*]: Each week we will take time to reflect, accompanied by music. This week, ponder a moment, you that felt like being “thunderstruck.” It might have been a time when you felt resolve about a decision, an “a-ah!” or it may have been simply a time when you were awed by God’s presence through nature, through a person or an incident and you experienced peace and joy, if only momentary.

God of the Sparrow



1 God of the spar - row God of the whale God of the swirl - ing
 2 God of the earth - quake God of the storm God of the trum - pet
 3 God of the rain - bow God of the cross God of the emp - ty
 4 God of the hun - gry God of the sick God of the prod - i -



stars How does the crea - ture say Awe
 blast How does the crea - ture cry Woe
 grave How does the crea - ture say Grace
 gal How does the crea - ture say Care



How does the crea - ture say Praise
 How does the crea - ture cry Save
 How does the crea - ture say Thanks
 How does the crea - ture say Life

5 God of the neighbor
 God of the foe
 God of the pruning hook
 How does the creature say Love
 How does the creature say Peace

6 God of the ages
 God near at hand
 God of the loving heart
 How do your children say Joy
 How do your children say Home

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, b. 1919
 Music: ROEDER, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929
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 Music © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.
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***Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
 and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.*

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

**Or*, He descended to the dead.

***Prayers of the People** “Come and Rest”.

Come and rest (echo: come and rest)
Come and listen (echo: come and listen)
Lay the fullness of your lives before the Maker (echo is a canon)

There are many people who are walking the Dark Woods for various reasons.

Give your church throughout the world a spirit of humility and repentance; teach us to trust always in the good news of your salvation. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

There are many places in this world where fear reigns.
Let us lift up names of places in this world that need our prayers...
[allow time for this and when the naming stops...]

God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Your weakness is stronger than human strength. Protect those who are vulnerable and give courage to all who are suffering (*especially*). Defend victims of crime and bring redemption to those who have harmed others. Give sabbath rest to all who labor. Hear us, O God.

God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Additional petitions may be included here.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord offering the words he taught us, saying:

**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.**

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

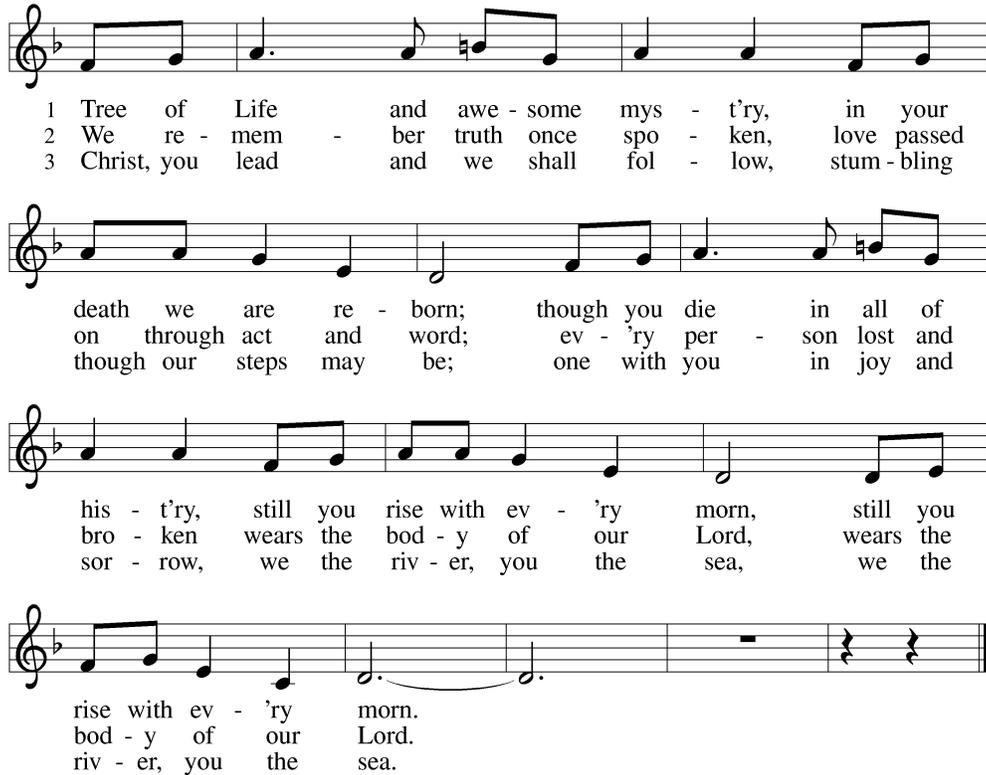
*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace,
and may say, "Peace be with you," remaining in your pew.*

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***Sending Song - *Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery* (ELW 334)**

Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery



1 Tree of Life and awe - some mys - t'ry, in your
2 We re - mem - ber truth once spo - ken, love passed
3 Christ, you lead and we shall fol - low, stum - bling

death we are re - born; though you die in all of
on through act and word; ev - 'ry per - son lost and
though our steps may be; one with you in joy and

his - t'ry, still you rise with ev - 'ry morn, still you
bro - ken wears the bod - y of our Lord, wears the
sor - row, we the riv - er, you the sea, we the

rise with ev - 'ry morn.
bod - y of our Lord.
riv - er, you the sea.

Blessing

May the Spirit of the Living God,
Made known to us most fully within life's Dark Wood:

Go before you to show you the way;

Go above you to watch over you;

Go behind you to push you into places you may not necessarily go yourself;

Go beneath you to uphold and uplift you;

Go beside you to be your strong and constant companion;

And dwell within you to remind you that you are surely not alone,
And may the fire of God's blessing burn brightly Upon you, and within you,
Now and always.

Amen.

Benediction Song

*There's a path (**there's a path**) ... and it leads us out together
To the wood (**to the wood**) ... where the darkness hovers still
We are sent (**we are sent**) ... and the Spirit goes before us
God says, "go (**God says, go**) ... be my presence in the world."*

OFFERINGS

*Offerings may be placed in the plates as you go out from this worship to live in service to
God throughout the week.*

Or you can give online <https://firstlutheransandpoint.breezechms.com/give/online>.

Postlude

Worship Notes:

Leaders: Pastor Lori Morton, Pastor Steve Neuder, Organ - Corina Hughes
Office Hours for Office Assistant Susie Olson - T & Th 9 a.m.-12 pm
208-263-2048
www.firstlutheransandpoint.org
Office@firstlutheransandpoint.com

Series based on *Gifts of the Dark Wood* by Eric Elnes
All liturgy by Marcia McFee, www.worshipdesignstudio.com
"There's a Path" & "Come and Rest," words by Marcia McFee, music by Chuck Bell.

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Blessing from *Gifts of the Dark Wood* by Eric Elnes.

Image: Ten Commandments, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55252> [retrieved February 28, 2021]. Original source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Ten_Commandments_\(Bible_Card\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Ten_Commandments_(Bible_Card).jpg).

Announcements:

Wednesdays @ 7 p.m. on Zoom - Exploration of our Lives of Prayer - Let Pastor Lori know if you would like an invite.

Special Lenten Offerings - Samaritan Inn Transitional Housing: Please contact Jon Pomeroy for more details about this dream and Helping Hands Helping Hearts.

Daylight Savings Time begins next week, so remember to spring ahead an hour.

Please note the following things to support you in your worship:

- First, thank you for adjusting to and heeding the precautions we have put in place to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, while we gather.
- In addition to wearing face masks, remaining 6' apart from other family groups or friend cohorts, staying home if you do not feel well, and refraining from shaking hands or hugging:
 - The Children's Playroom and Nursery is not available for use.
 - We ask that you meditate on or hum the songs as the music plays, rather than singing.
 - During the passing of the peace, we invite you to wave, show a peace sign, extend your arms in a gesture of blessing, etc. as you remain in your pew.
 - At the end of the worship, please remain seated until the ushers dismiss you by rows. The upright piano side of the sanctuary will leave through the door up front. The lectern side will exit the way you came in.
 - Fellowship is encouraged with social distancing, once you are outside of the building.
 - We requested your name and phone number in case we need to notify you of a potential exposure to Covid-19. We will heed HIPAA laws if or when the need arises.
 - On Sundays, the fellowship hall door that leads out to the Ontario St. parking lot will be exit only for anyone who might be seated in the overflow seating. The Main Ontario St. door and the doors nearest the church office will be the only doors unlocked for entry.
- Even with all of this, we cannot eliminate the risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus while gathering indoors. Therefore, we will record each worship and post for those who choose to stay home. Yes, the Holy Spirit connects us all together wherever we are, with the saints today, and all those who have gone before us in the faith.