

HOLY VESSELS



A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY

***Calvary Lutheran Church
Lenten Services***

Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Recovery
February 24, 2021
“Treasure”

‡AS WE GATHER‡

Each of us is created a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness—body, mind, and spirit—like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. Let us enter this Lenten “season of recovery” focusing on Jesus, our healer.

Prelude Music and Time for Silent Reflection

Beach glass begins as something whole and yet discarded. As it is tumbled by the sea, it is broken and polished until it becomes a treasured “mineral gem.” We do not embrace that suffering is necessary or God-given, but that suffering is a part of life. When pain comes and brokenness enters our lives, Jesus reaches out to touch and remind us of the Treasure that we *all* are—worthy of new life in the midst of hopelessness. In a year when pandemic has wreaked havoc on our world, we begin by affirming our journey to wholeness.

Prayer of Confession

Lent developed into a season of intense inward reflection and confession centuries after the life of Jesus. Yet, as we will see, Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives—to speak truth—no matter how broken. This is the beginning of compassion for ourselves and others. It is the beginning of healing.

The Latin origins of the word “confess” is to “study and acknowledge.”

This will be a season of studying how we can be a healing presence in our community. To do this, we acknowledge our need to restore our own Holy Vessels.

So let us begin in pray:

Creator God,

**We are bodies fashioned by your hand in your own image,
shapes and colors of diverse and immense beauty.**

And yet too often we have ignored the sacred nature of our physical lives.

**The Holy Vessels you have fashioned are tired and suffering,
ravaged by months of disrupted rhythms and ailment.**

**Our fragility has come into full view and many are weary,
discouraged and frightened.**

**We cannot fathom the proportions of loss so many have experienced,
and so we tend to look away, sometimes even from our own needs.**

**Help us, Healer.
Show us our strength in you.
Forgive our inertia.
Move us to move one step at a time
toward greater care of ourselves
and all of your children.**

In this silence, we acknowledge and confess our yearning
for forgiveness, healing and wholeness.

Silence

Hymn:

“We Come to You for Healing, Lord”

ELW #617

vv. 1

**We come to you for healing, Lord, of body, mind, and soul,
and pray that by your Spirit’s touch we may again be whole.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Know this: God’s love and grace surround you...

No. Matter. What.

You are a precious and holy vessel right now.

Christ’s forgiveness is a treasure given freely.

For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...
and breathe out with the relief of assurance that your sins are forgiven.

‡A READING FROM GOD’S WORD‡

Matthew 8:1-4, 16-17

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Sermon:

Pastor Sheryl

(Silence for reflection and meditation)

Hymn:

“O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come”

**ELW #610
vv.1&2**

**1. O Christ, the healer, we have come
to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored
when reached by love that never ends?**

**2. From ev'ry ailment flesh endures
our bodies clamor to be freed;
yet in our hearts we would confess
that wholeness is our deepest need.**

Prayers of the People

O Christ, our Healer,
we come before you to make our petitions known.
Hear our cries for healing of body, mind, and spirit.
We know that already you are at work among us,
showing us the way to recovery from the toxicities and grief of our time.

As beach glass that is treasured when found,
we trust that beauty from brokenness is possible
when we seek to bind together that which is wounded.
We pray especially for those who have experienced
the physical loss of family and friends in the pandemic
and those who are still suffering the consequences of the illness.
We pray for each person who suffers in body in other ways—
weariness from inactivity or weariness from overactivity in this time.

We pray for those whose treatment of maladies have been put on hold and those who suffered isolation in their illness, whatever the cause.
We pray grateful thanks for the medical staff everywhere around the world who have shown unbelievable strength and stamina and we mourn the demise of too many caregivers and essential workers who risked their lives for our sake.

We pray this day for...

...and now as our Lord Christ taught us, we are bold to pray...

**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.**

Ritual Action for the Week

The words of Jesus we heard in this week's healing story were
"I do choose. Be made clean!"

Faced with a request, and given the choice, Jesus chooses to say "yes."

And he says "yes" to each precious and treasured life.

Healing and wholeness is offered to everyone and will look different for each us.

For the next few moments, I invite you to take up your piece of beach glass

(or look at the image on the screen) and examine it closely,

noticing the worn edges and the color, feeling the texture and thickness.

Examine it as a treasure that is completely unique, which of course it is.

Then shift your thinking to your own rough edges.

What broken edges in your own life need help?

What will you do in this Lent season to focus on healing of body, mind, and spirit?

Take a moment to think on this and then when you are ready, enclose the broken piece in your hand and hold it to your heart, breathing deeply and inviting the Holy Spirit to live and move in you in a special way over the next six weeks. Keep your piece of beach glass close at hand... perhaps on your desk, nightstand, or pocket where you can feel it regularly this week.

If you don't yet have a piece of beach glass,
please feel free to stop by the church office to pick up a piece.

Closing Hymn: "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night"

**ELW #565
vv. 1,2&5**

**1. All praise to thee, my God, this night
for all the blessings of the light.
Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,
beneath thine own almighty wings.**

**2. Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
the ill that I this day have done;
that with the world, myself, and thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.**

**5. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

Blessing for the Journey

Jesus' healing actions often get "buzz" from onlookers. Some are amazed and in awe and sing praises. Some are bewildered and wonder at this teacher. Some are disgruntled and feel threatened by the boundaries he breaks and the change he invites. We are perhaps prone to all of these at one time or another. Our own work of recovery will sometimes feel immediately refreshing and sometimes it will demand uncomfortable effort. But the rewards are great.

So go now with confidence
as "Treasures of God,"
assured of the depth of God's love for each and every one of us;
and filled with the peace that passes all understanding.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:
"I do choose you."

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver
salve to your weary soul
and a spring in your step.

Amen.

Postlude

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Hymns: We Come to You for Healing, Lord: Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923 Text © 2002 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission. OneLicense.net #A-705226; **O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come:** CCLI Song # 2854744 Fred Pratt Green © 1969 Hope Publishing Company For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com CCLI License #1825044; **All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night:** Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711, alt. ©Public Domain

✠In Our Thoughts and Prayers✠

Prayers for healing: **Greta Mehling** (Health Issues), **Ron Wegelin** (health issues), **Shirle Schuldies** (health issues-mainly her heart), **Caleb Payne** (health issues), **Bruce** (Cancer treatments—friend of Jean Collins & Cathy Johnson), **Laynette Van Anne** (brain tumor—friend of Dee Brady), **LaDonna Schmidt** (colon cancer), **Bill Steele** (Recovering from COVID-19), **Beth Janecek** (Radiation), **Rich** (COVID-19 recovery—brother of Barb Gorr), **Cathy Rahrs** (rehab @ home), **Nancy & Tracy Steele** (COVID-19 health issues), **Harlan Meyer** (Lonnie Miller’s uncle), **Reuben & Gloria Gorr** (health issues), **Alan** (recovery of vision—Kathy Randall’s cousin), **Jordan Hein** (cancer treatment—former member of Calvary), **Julie** (cancer treatment—Travis Miller family), **Barb** (cancer—Marlene Downer’s sister-in-law), **Joan** (cancer—niece of Marj Nikont), **Patty** (cancer—Jim Dorn’s sister-in-law).

Prayers of comfort and peace: For the family and friends of **Gary Eskam**, and for the family and friends of **Bonnie** (cousin of Jack & Susan Martin)

Prayers of thanksgiving: For the healthy birth of **Sawyer Lea Samuelson** (parents-Chris and Brooke Samuelson, grandparents-Neal and Lora Blomenkamp).

Prayers for our church, community, nation, and world: in this time of Covid-19 and general unsettledness. For everyone in need!