

HOLY VESSELS



A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY

***Calvary Lutheran Church
Lenten Services***

**Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Recovery
March 10, 2021
*“Vision”***

‡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

Prolonged times of difficulty can impede our ability to see that anything can be different. The picture of our lives becomes dulled and hope for a brighter future can fade. We need God’s touch to awaken us from our sleep, as we will hear in one of this week’s healing stories. We need our vision of what is possible restored and our hope for the future renewed.

Prayer of Confession

In preparation for this time of confession, I invite you to take hold of your broken piece of glass, as we acknowledge those broken places of our lives and our need for the healing, restoration, and renewal of our Holy Vessels that only God can give.

Let us pray:

God of All Possibilities,
**Made in your image, you have tasked us as co-creators of a better world.
You bestowed imagination and the ability to learn and progress.
But we are tired. Our energy and enthusiasm wanes.
The call for ideas, solutions, work-arounds and adaptations
has been non-stop this past year—
including navigating mask mandates, social distancing, and online gatherings,
dealing with illness or the death of someone we loved,
finding ways to keep children engaged,
or figuring out how to maintain a passion for our work in the midst of trying times.
Often, we have wanted to give up, declare it all too hard and simply isolate,
waiting out the time for better days.
At times, it has felt overwhelming and so we looked away,
sometimes even from the need in our own community.**

**Help us, Healer.
Forgive our cynicism.
Heal our brokenness.
Restore our energy reserves.
Move us to move
one step at a time toward a vision more closely aligned with yours.**

In this time of silence, we acknowledge and confess our brokenness
and 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: Our faith in Jesus, no matter how small, is enough.
No. Matter. What.
Jesus longs for us to reach out to him
so that he might forgive us and give us healing and wholeness
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.

‡A READING FROM GOD’S WORD‡

Matthew 9:18-26

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.” Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well.

When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

**The Gospel of the Lord
Thanks be to God**

Sermon:

Pastor Sheryl

(Silence for reflection and meditation)

Hymn:

"Be Thou My Vision"

**ELW #793
vv.1,3&4**

**1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**3. Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**4. Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Prayers of the People

God of healing and wholeness,
we come before you, broken and weary though we may be.
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.

You remind us that we do not have to shoulder everything alone.
We give you thanks that through Jesus you come to us,
touch us, accompany us and restore us to wholeness and new life.

We pray especially for all who feel opportunity and possibility is cut off to them.
Who struggle to see how life can be any different than it is today,
Whose spirit is continually dampened and damaged by those who fail to see their worth
as God's beloved children or whose contributions are de-valued.

We give thanks for communities, churches, non-profits, and businesses
that support the flourishing of all voices,
especially voices that have been silenced or diminished.
We give thanks for the vision and courage of those who use their resources
and creativity to make our world a better place.

We ask for your vision and courage to re-imagine
how we each as individuals and as a church can use our gifts
to bring healing and wholeness to our world.

We pray this night 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 highlight this week from the healing story are “the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” We have touched tonight on our need to be renewed in spirit, to imagine how even our brokenness can be made new. We may feel like we have been slowly dying these last several months, but Jesus proclaims that is possible to be awakened; brought back to life with new vision and energy for the journey ahead.

And so, I invite you to play with creating a “different picture” from the brokenness. Sometime in the next week, take your broken piece and add some other pieces (there are more pieces of glass available in the narthex, or the pieces could be rocks, leaves, sticks, even pieces of torn colored paper), move them around on a flat surface as a mosaic artist would try various configurations when making a work of art.
But don't get locked in to only one way of thinking, of seeing.

Feel free to color outside the lines, so to speak.
And remember, even when the raw materials
of our lives that we have to work with feel broken;
in Christ we can gain
a new perspective
that can awaken a new vision of life within us.

When you have finished creating your work of art, take a photo of it. If you use a “wallpaper” on your phone, consider using your photo this week in this way, a reminder that we are capable of reworking, remaking, the pictures of what “life” can be. If you are not a techie person, keep your mosaic creation on a table or counter where you can see it frequently, and use it as a focal point for prayer.

Closing Hymn: “The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended”

**ELW #569
vv. 1,3&4**

**1. The day you gave us, Lord, has ended;
the darkness falls at your behest.
To you our morning hymns ascended;
your praise shall hallow now our rest.**

**3. As to each continent and island
the dawn leads on another day,
the voice of prayer is never silent,
nor dies the strain of praise away.**

**4. The sun, here having set, is waking
your children under western skies,
and hour by hour, as day is breaking,
fresh hymns of thankful praise arise.**

Blessing for the Journey

Each week we look at the reaction of the crowd in the healing story. This week there is an interesting reaction at Jesus’ notion that the girl was not dead. They laughed. Full-blown funeral rites had begun, flutes and all. And yet Jesus said, this is not the end of this story. The idea that life is always possible, that what feels dead can spring forth anew, may seem preposterous to some. Laughable even. But, in Christ all things are possible and death is not the final word, but God’s promise of new life is.

As you seek God's vision
go with confidence
that the One who raised a child to new life
can bring new life to all those places that feel like death in your life.

Go assured of the depth of God's love for each and every one of us;
And be filled with the peace that passes all understanding.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:
"You are not dead, you are sleeping."

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver
salve to your 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; **Be Thou My Vision:** Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931 ©Public Domain; **The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended:** Text: John Ellerton, 1826-1893, alt. ©Public Domain

✝In Our Thoughts and Prayers✝

Prayers for healing: **Barb Gorr** (upcoming back surgery), **Syl Holdt** (re-do knee surgery), **Greta Mehling** (health issues), **Ron Wegelin** (health issues), **Shirlie 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 for our church, community, nation, and world: in this time of Covid-19 and general unsettledness. For everyone in need!