

RIVER OF LIFE



17 MARCH 2024



RIVER OF LIFE LUTHERAN | refreshing truth for all people

725 S. Estrella Pkwy (Suite 120) Goodyear, Arizona 85338

Fifth Sunday in Lent

OUR PASTOR

Pastor Lincoln Albrecht (623) 312.8650 pastor.lincoln.albrecht@gmail.com

WELCOME TO RIVER OF LIFE

Thank you for joining us this morning. In our worship service, God's children—you & I—gather together before God to be strengthened through God's Word. In response to God's message of love to us, we offer God our worship and praise.

The worship folder you're holding has the entire Order of Service. If you have questions, feel free to ask one of our ushers or anyone near you. The unfamiliar can be intimidating—let us help you. We want you to be comfortable & comforted here.

Restrooms are located in the front corner for your convenience.

God wants everyone to worship together. We recognize that public worship is a learning process for children. Parents, if you feel like you need a moment, there is a room in the back of the worship area where you can see, hear, and participate in worship without being heard.

OUR FOCUS FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

In this last week before Holy Week (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, & Easter Sunday) the cross and the tomb are coming into view even more clearly. A ransom must be paid to set us free from sin. In our Gospel reading, we see the horrific rebelliousness of the people of Israel. Though they had been God's chosen people, they had grown scornful of his generosity, faithfulness, and love. They even abused his prophetic servants and conspired to kill his Son. Yet, God is committed to keeping all his promises. He sends his Son on a mission of mercy—giving of himself what none of us in this world could get for ourselves. Though we are all, by nature, deserving of God's wrath, we have instead received his mercy and even his grace. This grace doesn't just bring about our salvation, but also our transformation. By God's grace we are made God's glorious handiwork!

OPENING HYMN

By Grace I'm Saved | 384 (1-2)



1 By grace I'm saved, grace free and bound - less;
2 By grace God's Son, our on - ly Sav - ior,



My soul, be - lieve and doubt it not. Why wa - ver
Came down to earth to bear our sin. Was it be -



at this word of prom - ise? Has Scrip - ture ev - er
cause of your own mer - it That Je - sus died your



false - hood taught? So then this word must true re -
soul to win? No, it was grace, and grace a -



main: By grace you, too, shall heav'n ob - tain.
lone, That brought him from his heav'n - ly throne.

The Gathering

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the Son ✚ and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

HYMN OF CONFESSION

By Grace I'm Saved | **384 (3-4)**

*3 By grace! Oh, mark this word of promise
When you are by your sins oppressed,
When Satan plagues your troubled conscience,
And when your heart is seeking rest.
What reason cannot comprehend
God by his grace to you did send.*

*4 By grace to timid hearts that tremble,
In tribulation's furnace tried—
By grace, despite all fear and trouble,
The Father's heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure
If grace were not my anchor sure?*

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called and ordained 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.

P: Amen.

Praise & Prayer

M: Let us praise the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

HYMN OF CONFESSION

By Grace I'm Saved | **384 (5)**

*By grace! On this I'll rest when dying; In Jesus' promise I rejoice.
For though I know my heart's condition, I also know my Savior's voice.
My heart is glad; all grief has flown Since I am saved by grace alone.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: 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.

P: Amen.

The Word

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Ephesians 2

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



Jesus encouraged the little ones to come to him. During this portion of the worship service, God's truths are presented in a simplified way for all.

VERSE OF THE DAY

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

SONG OF PRAISE

Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound | 379 (1-2)

1 A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound—
2 The Lord has prom - ised good to me;

That saved a wretch like me! I
His Word my hope se - cures. He

once was lost but now am found,
will my shield and por - tion be

Was blind but now I see.
As long as life en - dures.

43 But now, this is what the Lord says—

he who created you, Jacob,

he who formed you, Israel:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

²When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers,

they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,

you will not be burned;

the flames will not set you ablaze.

³For I am the Lord your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

I give Egypt for your ransom,

Cush and Seba in your stead.

⁴Since you are precious and honored in my sight,

and because I love you,

I will give people in exchange for you,

nations in exchange for your life.

⁵Do not be afraid, for I am with you;

I will bring your children from the east

and gather you from the west.

⁶I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’

and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’

Bring my sons from afar

and my daughters from the ends of the earth—

⁷everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory,

whom I formed and made.”

GOSPEL

Luke 20

M: The Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 20.

P: Glory be to you, O Lord.

⁹ He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. ¹⁰ At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. ¹² He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

¹³ "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.'

¹⁴ "But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

When the people heard this, they said, "God forbid!"

¹⁷ Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

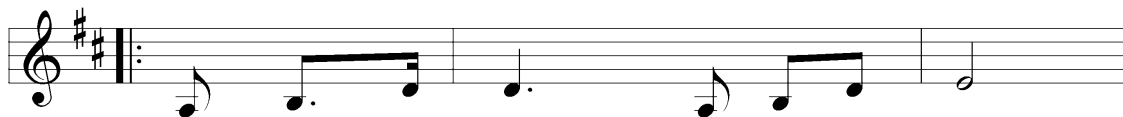
" 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'?"

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed."

¹⁹ The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

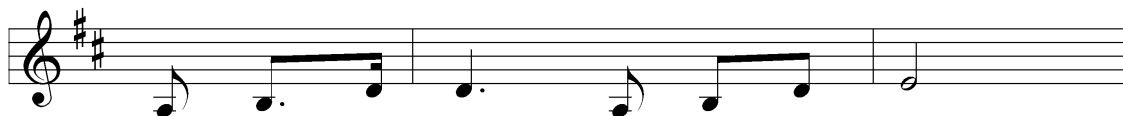
P: Praise be to you, O Christ!



1 In Christ a - lone my hope is found.
 2 In Christ a - lone— who took on flesh,
 3 There in the ground his bod - y lay,
 4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,



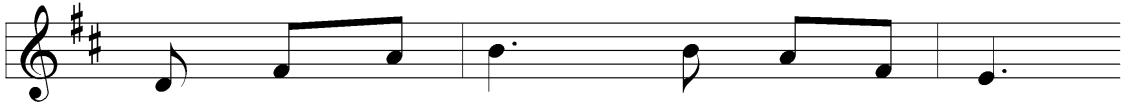
He is my light, my strength, my song;
 Full - ness of God in help - less babe.
 Light of the world by dark - ness slain;
 This is the pow'r of Christ in me;



This cor - ner - stone, this sol - id ground,
 This gift of love and right - eous - ness,
 Then burst - ing forth in glo - rious day
 From life's first cry to fi - nal breath,



Firm through the fierc - est drought and storm.
 Scorned by the ones he came to save.
 Up from the grave he rose a - gain!
 Je - sus com - mands my des - tin - y.



What heights of love, what depths of peace,
Till on that cross, as Je - sus died,
And as he stands in vic - tor - y,
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man



My Com - for - ter, my all in all,
For ev - 'ry sin on him was laid.
For I am his and he is mine—
Till he re - turns or calls me home,



Here in the love of Christ I stand.
Here in the death of Christ I live.
Bought with the pre - cious blood of Christ.
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.



The Sermon

Pastor Paul Mueller

Ephesians 2

Our Response to God's Word

M: In Christ, you have heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.

P: We believe in Christ and trust in the truth he has revealed to us in his Word.

M: Living and serving together in trust and hope, we confess our common faith.

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 fully 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.

THANK OFFERING



God's people respond with thankful hearts. The people of River of Life have joined to offer God the first-fruits of all he has given us. Our offerings support God's work in this community and the world. If you are a visitor with us, thank you for joining us today. Please do not feel obligated to support our ministry, but we ask that you do take time to fill out a digital connect card (azriveroflife.com/connect) so we can thank you for joining us. Thank you & God bless you!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Heavenly Father, you are the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and us, your children. You have heard our prayers and our cries for mercy.

P: Mighty God, you are our shield and our strength. You respond mercifully to our prayers and graciously to our requests. Thank you, Lord.

M: Heavenly Father, your generosity is overwhelming. You provide us each with daily bread. Your mercies are new every morning. You love us. Yet, because we are born steeped in sin, it is not in our nature to love you.

P: By your love, move us to love you and those around us. Increase a generous spirit in our hearts. You give us more than we need. Open our hearts, hands, and calendars to help those around us who are in need.

M: While the surrounding world blooms and blossoms, we know many who are beloved by you but still physically sick and even dying. Be with them, Lord. Assure them of your wisdom and your will for them. Soothe the troubled hearts and minds of their loved ones. Hear now our prayers for them:

A time for silent, personal prayer for God's children.

M: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have loved us beyond all measure, knowing and trusting in that love, we pray as the Son taught us:

P: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Prayer of Preparation: Lord God, Heavenly Father, You called me by name and declared that I was Your child through the washing of my Baptism. I desire, now, to receive the true body and blood of my Savior, Jesus Christ, in this Holy Meal. Continue to grant me grace, that I may stand before You and the body of believers and faithfully speak of the hope that is mine through Your life, death, and resurrection. Strengthen me. Grant me the forgiveness of sins and the ability to do that which pleases you; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

M: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them up to the Lord.

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is good and right so to do.

M: 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

Sanctus | CS



C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san -



na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -



na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: 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.

P: Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

Agnus Dei | CS



C: 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.

DISTRIBUTION

At River of Life, we believe that in the Lord's Supper, along with the bread & wine, we miraculously receive the real body & blood of Christ for the full forgiveness of sins. Scripture directs believers in preparation and reception: **"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."** (1 Cor. 11:29)



This meal is also an expression of unity with one another: **"Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."** (1 Cor. 10:17) Therefore we ask that if you are not familiar with our teachings, please speak with Pastor Albrecht before taking the Lord's Supper. Thank you.

Refrain



Take and eat, take and eat, this is my bod - y



giv-en up for you. Take and drink, take and drink,



this is my blood giv - en up for you. *Last time*

Verses



- 1 I am the Word that spoke and light was made;
- 2 I am the way that leads the ex - ile home;
- 3 I am the Lamb that takes a - way your sin;
- 4 I am the cor - ner - stone that God has laid;
- 5 I am the Light that came in - to the world;
- 6 I am the First and Last, the liv - ing One;



I am the seed that died to be re - born;
 I am the truth that sets the cap - tive free;
 I am the gate that guards you night and day.
 A chos-en stone and pre - cious in his eyes.
 I am the Light that dark - ness can - not hide;
 I am the Lord who died that you might live;



I am the bread that comes from heav'n a - bove;
 I am the life that rais - es up the dead;
 You are my flock: you know the Shep-herd's voice;
 You are God's dwell - ing place; on me you rest
 I am the Morn - ing Star that nev - er sets.
 I am the Bride-groom, this my wed - ding song.

To Refrain



I am the vine that fills your cup with joy.
 I am your peace, true peace my gift to you.
 You are my own: your ran - som is my blood.
 Like liv - ing stones, a tem - ple for God's praise.
 Lift up your face; in you my light will shine.
 You are my bride; come to the mar - riage feast.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

P: Amen.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Feed Your Children, God Most Holy | 616

Feed your chil - dren, God most ho - ly; Com - fort
sin - ners poor and low - ly. Je - sus, bread of life from
heav - en, Bless the food you here have giv - en.
As these gifts the bod - y nour - ish, May our souls
in gra - ces flour - ish Till with saints in heav'n - ly
splen - dor At your feast due thanks we ren - der.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace.
Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
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.

P: Amen.

SONG OF DEPARTURE *Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound* | 379 (3-4)

3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares
4 When we've been there ten thou - sand years,

I have al - read - y come; 'Tis
Bright shin - ing as the sun, We've

grace has brought me to safe thus far,
no less days to sing God's praise

And grace will lead me home.
Than when we'd first be - gun.



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS MORNING

We recognize how busy this world and your life can be. Thank you for setting aside a Sunday morning to be with us in God's house. Stick around for a bite to eat and a refreshing drink. One of life's greatest pleasures is meeting new people and growing lasting relationships. We'd love to get to know you better.

INTERESTED IN JOINING RIVER OF LIFE?

Would you like to learn what the Lutheran church believes and teaches? Are you interested in joining our church, or going through a refresher class? We would love to meet with you and study God's Word. If you're interested, speak with Pastor Albrecht.

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OURS!

Easter is right around the corner! To prepare our hearts and minds for what Christ has done for us, we have a number of opportunities to grow in and share our faith. On Thursday, March 28th (7pm) we will mediate on the meal Jesus gives us—the Lord's Supper. On Good Friday (4pm) we will hear why his death was the only way to save us. On Saturday, (8am) we will enjoy a breakfast together and ponder how one of Jesus' disciples handled his death and resurrection. Then on Sunday, March 31st, we have a day chock full of celebrations. The morning begins with breakfast at 7:30am, a festival worship service featuring the Branches Band at 9am, and an Easter Egg Hunt afterwards. Make plans to join us for this significant week and watch God grow your faith.

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Hymn #384 **By Grace I'm Saved** Text: Christian L. Scheidt, 1709-61, abr.; tr. composite.

Hymn #379 **Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound** Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, st. 1-3, abr.; John P. Rees, 19th century, st. 4.

Hymn #752 **In Christ Alone** Text: Keith Getty, b. 1974 and Stuart Townend, b. 1963 © 2002 Thankyou Music; admin. EMI CMG Publishing.

Hymn #741 **Take and Eat** Text (refrain): Michael Joncas, b. 1951 © 1989 GIA Publications, Inc. Text (verses): James Quinn, S. J., b. 1919 © James Quinn, S. J., Selah Publishing Co., Inc.

RIVER OF LIFE

Certainty & Hope In The Coming Days

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- Mar. 17** (10:30 am) Family Bible Study: **Blessed Be the Name: Adam & Eve**
- Mar. 20** (5:00 pm) Choir Practice
- Mar. 20** (6:00 pm) Lenten Soup Supper
- Mar. 20** (7:00 pm) Midweek Lenten Worship: **God On Trial—Restraint**
- Mar. 21** (4:30 pm) Church Council Meeting
- Mar. 24** (9:00 am) Worship **Spared: From Humiliation for Celebration**
- Mar. 24** (10:30 am) Family Bible Study: **Blessed Be the Name: Cain & Abel**
- Mar. 28** (7:00 pm) Maundy Thursday (with Lord's Supper) **Spared: And Strengthened**

CONNECTING WITH RIVER OF LIFE

Videos of recent worship services and audio recordings of weekly sermons are available online. Check out our website or our Facebook page.

AZRiverOfLife.com facebook.com/AZRiverOfLife

refreshing truth for you