

## Order of Service for Sunday March 14, 2021 4th Sunday in Lent



St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, OR  
S. Kay Young, Homilist and Doug Young, Lector

### A Greeting

Celebrant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

*People: His mercy endures for ever.*

**The Decalogue** is said, the people standing or kneeling.

The response is *Amen. Lord have mercy.*

Hear the commandments of God to his people:

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.

You shall have no other gods but me.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

Honor your father and your mother.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not commit murder.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not commit adultery.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not steal.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not be a false witness.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:8,9*

**Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.**

*Silence may be kept.*

***Minister and People***

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. ***Amen.***

Lord have mercy  
*Christ have mercy*  
Lord have mercy

**Today's Collect:** Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

**First Lesson -- Numbers 21:4-9**

From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

- Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People
- Thanks be to God

## **Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22**

- 1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, \*  
and his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Let all those whom the Lord has redeemed proclaim \*  
that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.
- 3 He gathered them out of the lands; \*  
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.
- 17 Some were fools and took to rebellious ways; \*  
they were afflicted because of their sins.
- 18 They abhorred all manner of food \*  
and drew near to death's door.
- 19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, \*  
and he delivered them from their distress.
- 20 He sent forth his word and healed them \*  
and saved them from the grave.
- 21 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy \*  
and the wonders he does for his children.
- 22 Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving \*  
and tell of his acts with shouts of joy.

## **Second Lesson – Ephesians 2:1-10**

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved-- and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God-- not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

- Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People
- Thanks be to God

## **A Reading from the Gospel of John 3:14-21**

Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people

loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

- This is the Gospel of the Lord
- Thanks be to God

**Homily “Snake on a Stick” by S. Kay Young, for 4th Sunday of Lent, Year B, on John3:14-21**

Today is a study of human nature. Poor Moses, who had to tell the people they were almost there, but they had to go AROUND Edom. They were walking in their own footprints. Folks younger than 40 didn’t remember another, “normal” life. They had grown up in the desert. “There is no water, no food, and that manna is awful.” Even their blessings had become something to complain about. Sound familiar? There’s nothing on TV, and I’ve binged anything good. Kids are cranky; we’re possibly in the home stretch, and we’re in full throated complaint mode. I honestly hope God doesn’t sent us poisonous fire snakes in reproach for our unbelief! The fire snakes bit painfully and many died.

So the people called on Moses and Moses called on God, and we have the serpent on a pole. You’ve seen this symbol on every ambulance. It’s the Rod of Asclepius, a Greek symbol. The snake was considered a symbol of renewal by shedding its skin; of healing, and rebirth. Rather a two edged sword, to mix metaphors. The people were merely to look upon this thing and they would be healed. I find it interesting that it did not prevent them from being bitten; it would not take away their sin or their pain and it did not take away the snakes. It was a reminder to look up to God for healing.

Eight hundred years later King Hezekiah had the snake on a stick, which he called Nehushtan, or brazen snake, destroyed. The people had been lighting incense before it for a long time. It had become an idol, and God was pleased to see him destroy it, according to 2 Kings. Again even the blessing was used badly by our human nature.

In the Gospel today Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night in unbelief. He was a Pharisee, a religious leader of the Jewish people, who had much to lose by following Jesus. And Jesus tries to explain the unexplainable. Nicodemus was acquainted with the story of Moses and the serpent. So Jesus told him that He, the Son of Man would have to be lifted up in like manner.

Jesus is God, but human nature has not changed too much in 2,800 years. We are coming to the end of Lent, the undoing of Jesus. I think that this lent we are being called to look at our blessings, and to examine our faith. Like the courageous man Nicodemus we need to seek out Jesus and inquire about our faith. Has it become automatic and rote? Are we clinging to practices that were once relevant but no longer serve us or God? Giving up chocolate is not helping those Jesus Himself asked us to help. Our works are not what saves us, but shouldn’t we look at them from time to time as life around us changes? John tells us in his letter to the Ephesians that we have been raised up with Christ and seated with him.

Right now, though we are dead through trespasses and sin, children of wrath according to John's letter to the Ephesians, the mercy and love of God has made us alive in Christ. He was lifted up so that we may have eternal life for the mere price of looking up. Not by looking down at one another in their—our—shortcomings. Not by works, not in competition or judging of the circumstances that beset us in our all too human state, but by coming to the light of Christ.

It's not too late to have a holy Lent.

**Prayers of the People: a special form for the 4th Sunday in Lent**

**The response is *People Lord, graciously hear us.***

God lifted up Christ in the wilderness of the world. As we prepare for the paschal feast, let us lift up our prayers to God for all peoples everywhere.

For the holy catholic church throughout the world, sharing the death and resurrection of Christ.

**Lord, hear us.**

***People Lord, graciously hear us.***

For this parish of St. Martin's, that we may be faithful to our mission and respond to the spiritual needs of those around us with compassion, joy, and truth.

**Lord, hear us.**

***People Lord, graciously hear us.***

For Michael our Presiding Bishop, Diana our Bishop, for all clergy, deacons, and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

**Lord, hear us.**

***People Lord, graciously hear us.***

For all who are preparing for new birth in the waters of baptism.

**Lord, hear us.**

***People Lord, graciously hear us.***

For all the peoples of the earth and for their leaders.

**Lord, hear us.**

***People Lord, graciously hear us.***

For all who are sick, wandering, afflicted, or oppressed, especially those on our prayer list and those we name at this time, silently or aloud.

**Lord, hear us.**

***People Lord, graciously hear us.***

For those who rest in the peace of Christ, and for all the departed, especially Florence Farmer, Socco Fierro; Clayton Keith Reed III; Timothy McQueary; Miguel Alba, for all who have died from Covid, and for all whose names are known to God. May light perpetual shine upon them.

**Lord, hear us.**

**People Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our families, friends, and companions, and for all those we love.

**Lord, hear us.**

**People Lord, graciously hear us.**

### ***Celebrant***

Blessed are you, God of Moses, for you sent the light into the world. Receive the prayers we offer this day for those in need in every place and anoint the head of all who come to your table. Glory to you for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Prayers**

#### **A Collect for Lent :**

Almighty God, may we, by the prayer and discipline of Lent, enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings; that by following in the Way, we may come to share in the glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### ***For the Poor and the Neglected***

*(BCP p. 824)*

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### ***For the Oppressed***

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **Lord's Prayer**

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,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Prayer for St. Martin's**

God of Love,  
open our eyes and ears to perceive you at work  
in creation, the church, and our parish.  
Fill our hearts with your love  
that we may reach out in love to others.  
Stir up our imagination with your Holy Spirit  
that we may find new ways to live into life with you.  
Give us a vision of your mission  
that we may share your love and your spirit  
in all the places where we work and play and worship you.  
In Jesus' holy name, **Amen.**

**Blessings:**

**Dismissal:**            **Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.**  
*Thanks be to God*

