

"A Suitable Church"

February 24th, 2021



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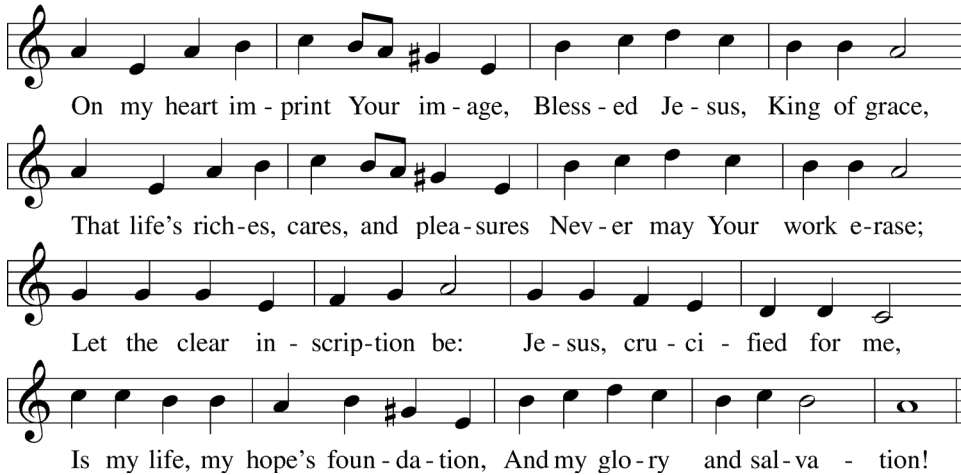
A NOTE TO OUR VISITORS

We're glad you're here! If you've never been to a liturgical Lutheran service it may look and sound different, but please bear with us! We worship the way we do for a reason. We gather together to receive the gifts of salvation that our Triune God eagerly comes to give to us through His Word and Sacrament. In these gifts we receive faith, forgiveness, and life everlasting. Our worship is the unwrapping of these gifts: the liturgy, hymns, and preaching proclaim His Word to us, remind us of the promise of our baptism, and prepare us to receive the Lord's Supper. Through these means of grace God comes to serve us so our worship is organized and centered around receiving these gifts through faith.

Noon service responses are spoken. Evening service responses are sung.

HYMN

422 On My Heart Imprint Your Image



On my heart im - print Your im - age, Bless - ed Je - sus, King of grace,
That life's rich - es, cares, and plea - sures Nev - er may Your work e - rase;
Let the clear in - scrip - tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,
Is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, And my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

OPENING SENTENCES

- P** Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,
C **the light no darkness can overcome.**
- P** Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening, **C** **and the day is almost over.**
P Let Your light scatter the darkness. **C** **and illumine Your Church.**
- P** Joyous light of glory:
C **of the immortal Father;**
heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ.
We have come to the setting of the sun,
and we look to the evening light.
We sing to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:
You are worthy of being praised
with pure voices forever.
O Son of God, O Giver of life:
the universe proclaims Your glory.

THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT

- P** Blessèd are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

PSALMODY

P Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
C **the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

P O Lord, I call to You; come to me quickly;

C **hear my voice when I cry to You.**

P Let my prayer rise before You as incense,

C **the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

*Men: Set a watch before my mouth, O Lord,
and guard the door of my lips.*

*Women: Let not my heart incline to any evil thing;
Let me not be occupied in wickedness with evildoers.*

P But my eyes are turned to You, O God;
in You I take refuge.
Strip me not of my life.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P Let my prayer rise before You as incense,

C **the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

P Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before You, O Lord, and let Your loving-kindness descend on us that, with purified minds, we may sing Your praises with the Church on earth and the whole heavenly host and may glorify You forever.

C **Amen.**

READING FROM THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS, LETTER 16

Screwtape writes Wormwood concerning the relationship of his “patient” to the church. Along the way we learn something of what betrayal looks like when Christians “sell out” for a low-cost Christianity.

EVENING SERVICE—WORSHIP DRAMA

A Suitable Church

Betrayal takes many forms. Christ is betrayed whenever we set ourselves above Him as critic instead of below Him as disciple. We are betrayed by fellow Christians who would have the church be something other than the cross-bearing Body of Christ.



1 Lord of our life and God of our sal - va - tion, Star of our
 2 See round Your ark the hun - gry bil - lows curl - ing; See how Your
 3 Lord, be our light when world - ly dark - ness veils us; Lord, be our
 4 Peace in our hearts, where sin - ful thoughts are rag - ing, Peace in Your



night and hope of ev - 'ry na - tion: Hear and re - ceive Your
 foes their ban - ners are un - furl - ing And with great spite their
 shield when earth - ly ar - mor fails us; And in the day when
 Church, our trou - bled souls as - suag - ing, Peace when the world its



Church's sup - pli - ca - tion, Lord God Al - might - y.
 fi - ery darts are hurl - ing, O Lord, pre - serve us.
 hell it - self as - sails us, Grant us Your peace, Lord:
 end - less war is wag - ing, Peace in Your heav - en.

PASSION READING

Matthew 26:47-56

- P** The Holy Passion of Christ according to St. Matthew, the twenty sixth chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

- P** In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.
- C** **But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.**

SERMON

LITANY FOR LENT

The congregation's response may begin just as the leader's petition ends so that the word "Lord" is sung simultaneously by both leader and congregation.

L In peace let us pray to the Lord:



C Lord, have mer - cy.

L For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

L For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord: **C** **Lord, have mercy.**

L For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord: **C** **Lord, have mercy.**

L For [*names of synodical and district presidents*], for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

L For [*name of president or monarch*], for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord: **C** **Lord, have mercy.**

L For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord: **C** **Lord, have mercy.**

L For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord: **C** **Lord, have mercy.**

L For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord: **C** **Lord, have mercy.**

L For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord: **C** **Lord, have mercy.**

L For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord:



C Thanks be to God.

L Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



C To You, O Lord.

COLLECT FOR PEACE

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICAMUS & BENEDICTION

P Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the T Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C Amen.

HYMN TO DEPART

845 *Where Charity and Love Prevail*



1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail There
2 With grate - ful joy and ho - ly fear His
3 For - give we now each oth - er's faults As
4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known; Let



God is ev - er found; Brought here to - geth - er
char - i - ty we learn; Let us with heart and
we our faults con - fess, And let us love each
all con - ten - tion cease; Be God's the glo - ry



by Christ's love By love are we thus bound.
mind and soul Now love Him in re - turn.
oth - er well In Chris - tian ho - li - ness.
that we seek; Be ours His ho - ly peace.

5 Let us recall that in our midst
Dwells Christ, His only Son;
As members of His body joined
We are in Him made one.

6 For love excludes no race or clan
That names the Savior's name;
His family embraces all
Whose Father is the same.

Lent / Easter Schedule

Lenten Midweeks

Midweek Dinner 5:00 PM

Service 12:15 & 6:00 PM

Midweek Class 6:30 PM

Holy Week

Maundy Thursday 7:30 PM

Good Friday 7:30 PM

Easter Vigil 7:30 PM

Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service 7:00 AM

Easter Egg Hunt 8:15 AM

Sunday School 8:30 AM

Easter Day Service 9:30 AM

Acknowledgments

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My dear Wormwood,

You mentioned casually in your last letter that the patient has continued to attend one church, and one only, since he was converted, and that he is not wholly pleased with it. May I ask what you are about? Do you realize that unless it is due to indifference it is a very bad thing? Surely you must know that if a man can't be cured of churchgoing, the next best thing is to send him all over the neighborhood looking for the church that 'suits' him until he becomes a taster and connoisseur of churches.

In the first, the local church should always be attacked, because, being a unity of place and not of likings, it brings people of different status and thinking together in the kind of unity the Enemy desires. The attraction principle, on the other hand, makes each church into a kind of club, and finally, if all goes well, into a faction. In the second, the search for a 'suitable' church makes the man a critic where the Enemy wants him to be a pupil. What He wants of the layman in church is an attitude which may, indeed, be critical in the sense of rejecting what is false and unhelpful, but which is wholly uncritical in the sense that it does not appraise—does not waste time in thinking about what it rejects, but lays itself open in uncommenting, humble receptivity to any nourishment that is in going. So pray bestir yourself and send this fool the round of the neighboring churches as soon as possible.

The two churches nearest to him, I have looked up in the office. At the first of these the Vicar is a man who has been so long engaged in watering down the faith to make it easier for a supposedly incredulous and hard-headed congregation that it is now he who shocks them with his unbelief. At the other we have Fr Spike. The humans are often puzzled to understand the range of his opinions. We, of course, see the connecting link, which is Hatred. But I must warn you that he has one fatal defect: he really believes.

But there is one good point which both these churches have in common—they are both party churches. I think I warned you before that if your patient can't be kept out of the Church, he ought at least to be violently attached to some party within it. I don't mean on really doctrinal issues; about those, the more lukewarm he is the better. The real fun is working up hatred between those who say 'mass' and those who sat 'holy communion' when neither party could state the difference between Hooker's doctrine and Thomas Aquinas.

Your affectionate uncle,

SCREWTAPE