LIVING AMONG THE BIBLE’S TREES

AS WE GATHER - Unless we are especially environmentally minded, we may care only about the trees we see on a daily basis, such as the ones that drop sap or leaves on our cars, shade our homes, and paint our landscapes. Although we may not see them every day, the Bible’s trees are nonetheless relevant to us. In fact, considering them helps us realize why we need a Savior, how God provided a Savior for us in the person of Jesus Christ, and how the saved lives of repentant believers look. During this repentant season of Lent, we consider “Living among the Bible’s Trees.” We begin by considering the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There we realize that although the fruit of that tree renders us by nature blind, dead, and enemies of God, the fruit of Christ’s tree brings us light, life, and salvation.

PRESERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME
[†Means please stand; ¶Means please be seated]

†OPENING HYMN

Jesus, Refuge of the Weary

LSB 423

1 Jesus, refuge of the weary, Blest Redeemer,
2 Do we pass that cross unheeding, Breathing no re-
3 Jesus, may our hearts be burning With more fervent

whom we love, Fountain in life’s desert dreary, Savior
pen-tant vow, Though we see You wounded, bleeding, See Your
love for You; May our eyes be ever turning To be-

from the world above: Often have Your eyes, of-fend-ed,
thorn-en circled brow? Yet Your sin-less death has brought us
hold Your cross a new Till in glo-ry, part-ed nev-er

(continued)
INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

ADDRESS

P Brothers and sisters, we are entering the season of Lent, a time for contrition and repentance, a time of preparation to celebrate our Lord’s Easter resurrection. The discipline of Lent has traditionally included repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love. They all help us wage our spiritual warfare against the sin that separates us from one another, from God, and from His good creation. Scripture tells of many trees, some literal and some figurative; from them we will seek to gain insight and depth of faith as we see again our need for a Savior and our Lord’s sacrifice on our behalf. I invite you to commit yourselves to this Lenten discipline.

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 1:1–3; 96:12–13; Isaiah 61:1, 3

P Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord.
C He is like a tree planted by streams of water.
P The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; . . .
C that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.
P Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord,
C for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth.

READING

Joel 2:12–19

12“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 13and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. 14Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering
for the LORD your God?
15Blow the trumpet in Zion;
   consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
16gather the people.
Consecrate the congregation;
   assemble the elders;
gather the children,
even nursing infants.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
   and the bride her chamber.
17Between the vestibule and the altar
   let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep
and say, "Spare your people, O LORD,
   and make not your heritage a reproach,
a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
   "Where is their God?"
18Then the LORD became jealous for his land
   and had pity on his people.
19The LORD answered and said to his people,
   "Behold, I am sending to you
   grain, wine, and oil,
   and you will be satisfied;
   and I will no more make you
   a reproach among the nations.

P  This is the Word of the Lord.
C  Thanks be to God.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES
P  Ashes have been a sign of repentance throughout the centuries. They are reminders of the
   "sackcloth and ashes" worn by penitents of ages gone by. In the shape of the cross, they
   announce our reliance on our Lord's sacrifice on the tree of the cross on our behalf.
   [Those who desire to receive ashes come forward. Congregation may be seated during the
   imposition of ashes.]

CHORAL SELECTION  
"Lord, Have Mercy"

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS
P  If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C  But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and
   cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
(Silence for meditation and reflection)
P  Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C  Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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 justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

HYMN

Savior, When in Dust to Thee

1 Savior, when in dust to Thee Low we bow the adoring knee;
Scarcely lift our weeping eyes; O, by all Thy endless hour Of the insulting tempter’s pow’r.

2 By Thy helpless infant years, By Thy life of want and tears, By Thy days of deep distress veiled the skies O’er the dread ful sacrifice, Listen heav’n restored, Might-y, re-as-cend-ed Lord, Bend-ing

3 By Thine hour of dire despair, By Thine ag-o-ny of prayer, By the cross, the nail, the thorn, held in vain the rising God, O, from earth to

4 By Thy deep expiring groan, By the sad se-

Copyright by J. A. Deems. Published by Crafton J. Bierman. Used by permission.
PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
All: Let us pray. Almighty and Everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Genesis 2:8–9, 15–17; 3:1–24

8And the L ORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9And out of the ground the L ORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...

15The L ORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16And the L ORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”...

1Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the L ORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” 2And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” 4But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8And they heard the sound of the L ORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the L ORD God among the trees of the garden. 9But the L ORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” 11He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” 13Then the L ORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” 14The L ORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” 16To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he
shall rule over you.” 17And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it;’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

20The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. 22Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” 23therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

**Thanks be to God.**

---

**PSALM**

**Psalm 1; antiphon: v. 3**

**P** He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

**C** nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

**P** but his delight is in the law of the LORD,

**C** and on His law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

**P** The wicked are not so,

**C** but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

**P** Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

**C** nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

**P** for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,

**C** but the way of the wicked will perish.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

---

**SECOND LESSON**

**Deuteronomy 30:15–20**

15See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. 16If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his just decrees then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

17But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, 18I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You
shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. 

19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live,

20 loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL

O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,

the founder and perfecter of our faith,

who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,

and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

HOLY GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

1[Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2 “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

16[Jesus said:] “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.
SERMON

"Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil"
Pastor David Vanderhyde; University Hill Lutheran Church

NICE CREED

I believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made Man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, Whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.
OFFERTORY

Create in Me A Clean Heart, O God

C Create in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right spir-it within me. Cast me not a-way from Thy pres-ence, and take not Thy Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store un-to me the joy of Thy sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with Thy free spir-it. A-men.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray for the Church here and around the world, and people everywhere in their various needs. For everyone weighed down by their bondage to sin and an inability to stop sinning by thought, word, and deed, let us pray to the Lord.

C For the sake of Christ’s sacrifice on the tree of the cross, heavenly Father, open their ears to hear the Gospel anew; free them to live before You in Your kingdom.

P For everyone who has fallen prey to society’s distorted morality, let us pray to the Lord.

C For the sake of Christ’s sacrifice on the tree of the cross, heavenly Father, surround them with faithful and caring members of the Body of Christ; call them back in repentance and hope.

P For those who keep the peace at home or are deployed abroad, for those who provide care and guidance in relationships, finances, and health, and for those who respond to natural disasters and crises of various sorts, let us pray to the Lord.

C For the sake of Christ’s sacrifice on the tree of the cross, heavenly Father, accompany them with Your Holy Spirit; protect them from harm, and give them wisdom in all circumstances.

P For ourselves and the Church around the world as we seek to produce true spiritual fruit, let us pray to the Lord.

C For the sake of Christ’s sacrifice on the tree of the cross, heavenly Father, assure us that we are Your pleasant planting; forgive our errors, and send us to serve in faithfulness and love.

P These and any other things You would have us ask, heavenly Father, grant to us for the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.
PREFACE
P The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.
P Lift up your hearts.
C We lift them to the Lord.
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE
P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the paschal feast in sincerity and truth. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

C Holy, ho-ly, ho-ly Lord God of Sab-a-oth a-dored;
Heav’n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.
Sing ho-san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san-na to the Lord;
Tru-ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING
P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him. We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.
C Amen.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION
PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.  C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P Remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C 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.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God

You take the sin of the world away;
You take the sin of the world away;

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ,

And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.
Reminder: gluten free wafer (by holding up an index finger to the elder), and non-alcoholic wine (the white grape juice in the center) are also available.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

The Tree of Life

LSB 561

1 The tree of life with ev’ry good In Eden’s
2 The stillness of that sacred grove Was bro’ken,
3 What mercy God showed to our race, A plan of
4 Now from that tree of Jesus’ shame Flows life e-

ho-ly or-chard stood, And of its fruit so pure and
as the serpent strove With tempt’ing voice Eve to be-
res-cue by His grace: In send-ing One from wom-an’s
ter-nal in His name; For all who trust and will be-

(continued)
sweet God let the man and wom-an eat. Yet in this
guile And Ad-am too by sin de-file. O day of
seed, The One to fill our great-est need— For on a
lieve, Sal-va-tion's liv-ing fruit re-ceive. And of this
gar-den al-so grew An-oth-er tree, of which they
sad-ness when the breath Of fear and dark-ness, doubt and
tree up-lift-ed high His on-ly Son for sin would
fruit so pure and sweet The Lord in-vites the world to
knew; Its love-ly limbs with fruit a-
death, Its aw-ful poi-son first dis-
die, Would drink the cup of scorn and
eat, To find with-in this cross of
dorned A-gainst whose eat-ing God had warned.
played With-in the world so new-ly made.
dread To crush the an-cient ser-pent's head!
wood The tree of life with ev-ry good.

© 1993 Bruce W. Becker. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License .NET, no. 100013230.

In Adam We Have All Been One

1 In Ad-am we have all been one, One huge re-bel-lious man;
2 We fled Thee, and in los-ing Thee We lost our broth-er too;
3 But Thy strong love, it sought us still And sent Thine on-ly Son
4 O Thou who, when we loved Thee not, Didst love and save us all,

We all have fled that eve-ning voice That sought us as we ran.
Each sin-gly sought and claimed his own; Each man his broth-er slew.
That we might hear His Shep-herd's voice And, hear-ing Him, be one.
Thou great Good Shep-herd of man-kind, O hear us when we call.

5. Send us Thy Spirit, teach us truth; 6. Then shall our song united rise
Thou Son, O set us free To Thine eternal throne.
From fancied wisdom, self-sought ways, Where with the Father evermore
To make us one in Thee. And Spirit Thou art One. Amen.

O Sing of Christ

1 O sing of Christ, whose birth made known
   The kind-ness of the Lord,
2 What Ad-am lost, none could re-claim,
   And Par-a-dise was barred
   E-ter-nal Word made flesh and bone
   So we could be re-stored.
   Un-ti-l the sec-ond Ad-am came
   To mend what sin had marred.
   Up-on our frail hu-man-i-ty
   God’s fin-ger chose to trace
   For when the time was full and right
   God sent His only Son;
   The full-ness of His de-i-ty
   The i-con of His grace.
   He came to us as life and light
   And our re-demp-tion won.

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

P O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.
C His mercy endures forever.
P Let us pray. We give thanks, heavenly Father, that You have assured us of entrance to that feast in the heavenly Eden, where we shall sit at table with Your Son and those who have preceded us in the faith. Grant us strength for the days ahead, that we may display in our lives the new life You have bestowed on us in Your grace; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.
C Amen.

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you His peace.
C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer

1 Guide me, O Thou great Re-deem-er, Pil-grim through this
2 O-pen now the crys-tal foun-tain Whence the heal-ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor-dan, Bid my anx-i-ous
   bar-ren land. I am weak, but Thou art might-y;
   stream doth flow; Let the fi-ery, cloud-y pul-lar
   fears sub-side; Death of death and hell’s de-struc-tion,
Hold me with Thy pow'r-ful hand. Bread of heav-en,
Lead me all my jour-ney through. Strong de-liv'-rer,
Land me safe on Ca-naan's side. Songs of prai-ses,
bread of heav-en, Feed me till I want no more.
strong de-liv'-rer, Be Thou still my strength and shield;
songs of prai-ses I will ev-er give to Thee;
Feed me till I want no more.

Public domain

POSTLUDE

From Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series C, Quarter 2.
Copyright © 2018 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

WE WISH TO THANK the following for their participation in our worship service this evening:
Acolyte.................................................................Wyatt Tyler
Altar Guild..........................................................Marilyn Kettner, Beth Tevah & Carolyn Meritt
Communion Assistant & Liturgist...............................Pastor Roger Wohletz; Christ
Greeter........................................................................Renee Ortado
Music Director of Christ Lutheran Church........................Beth Buss
Special Music: ..........................................................Christ Choristers, Beth Buss, Director
Organist / Music Director of University Hills Lutheran Church...........................................Daniel Vanderhyde
Ushers ..........................................................................Phil Vandre, Naomi Kettner, Brian Albee, Rob Hatton
Worship Leader ..........................................................Pastor David Vanderhyde; U-Hills