

# THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

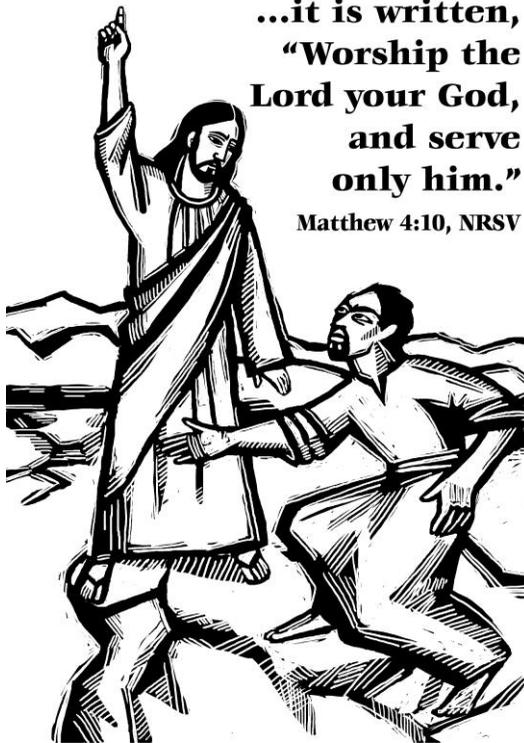
March 1, 2020

## Worship Focus

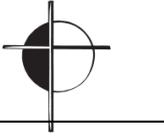
Close Encounters with The Christ: Christ and Satan

**...it is written,  
"Worship the  
Lord your God,  
and serve  
only him."**

Matthew 4:10, NRSV



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# Order of Service for THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

*Service of Word and Sacrament*

*Christian Worship, p. 26*

*Service of Word and Sacrament © Northwestern Publishing House 1993.*

*"Thank the Lord" Tune: Richard Hillert. © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. Augsburg Fortress*

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## ✠ Gathering ✠

### OPENING HYMN

378 - All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall



1 All man - kind fell in Ad - am's fall;  
2 Through all our pow'rs cor - rup - tion creeps  
3 From hearts de - praved, to e - vil prone,  
4 But Christ, the sec - ond Ad - am, came  
5 As by one man all man - kind fell



One com - mon sin in - fects us all.  
And us in dread - ful bond - age keeps;  
Flow thoughts and deeds of sin a - lone;  
To bear our sin and woe and shame,  
And, born in sin, was doomed to hell,



From one to all the curse de - scends,  
In guilt we draw our in - fant breath  
God's im - age lost, the dark - ened soul  
To be our life, our light, our way,  
So by one Man, who took our place,



And o - ver all God's wrath im - pends.  
And reap its fruits of woe and death.  
Nor seeks nor finds its heav'n - ly goal.  
Our on - ly hope, our on - ly stay.  
We all were jus - ti - fied by grace.

6 We thank you, Christ; new life is ours,  
New light, new hope, new strength, new pow'rs;  
This grace our ev'ry way attend  
Until we reach our journey's end.

Text: Lazarus Spengler, 1479–1534, abr.; tr. Matthias Loy, 1828–1915, st. 1-4, 6, alt.; *The Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis, 1941, st. 5, alt.

Tune: WENN WIR IN HÖCHSTEN NÖTEN SEIN (LM) Louis Bourgeois, c. 1510–c. 1561.

## INVOCATION

**Minister**            The grace of our Lord (+) Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**Congregation**    **And also with you.**

## CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION

**M** God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

**C** **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.**

**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 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.

**C** **Amen.**



## LORD HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

**M** For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.



**C:** Lord, have mer - cy.

**M** For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.



**C:** Christ, have mer - cy.

**M** For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.



**C:** Lord, have mer - cy.

**M** Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:



**C:** A - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**M** Let us pray. Lord our strength, the battle of good and evil rages within and around us, and our ancient foe tempts us with his deceits and empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your Word, and when we fall, raise us up again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



**C:** A - men.

## ✘ The Word ✘

### FIRST LESSON

Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-7

*The sad account of the Fall answers our questions about the origin of sin and death.*

GENESIS 2:7 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup> Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup> And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

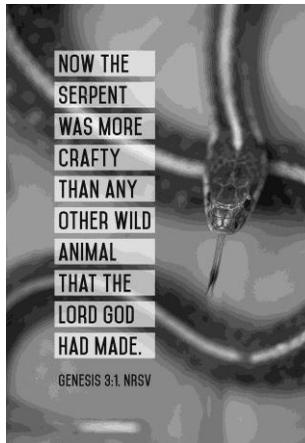
<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

<sup>3:1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

<sup>4</sup> “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.



PSALM 130

From Depths of Woe I Cry to You (cw 305)



1 From depths of woe I cry to you; Lord, hear me,  
 2 Your love and grace a - lone a - vail To blot out  
 3 There - fore my hope is in the Lord And not in  
 4 My soul is wait - ing for the Lord As one who



I im - plore you. Bend down your gra - cious ear to me;  
 my trans - gres - sion. The best and ho - liest deeds must fail  
 my own mer - it; It rests up - on his faith - ful Word  
 longs for morn - ing; No watch - er waits with great - er hope



My prayer let come be - fore you. If you kept  
 To break sin's dread op - pres - sion. Be - fore you  
 To them of con - trite spir - it. That he is  
 Than I for his re - turn - ing. I hope as



rec - ord of my sin And held a - gainst me  
 none can boast - ing stand, But all must fear your  
 mer - ci - ful and just— This is my com - fort  
 Is - rael in the Lord; He sends re - demp - tion



what I've been, How could I stand be - fore you?  
 strict de - mand And live a - lone by mer - cy.  
 and my trust. His help I wait with pa - tience.  
 through his Word. We praise him for his mer - cy.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546, abr.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, st. 1-3, alt.; Gracia Grindal, b. 1943, st. 4.  
 St. 4 © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Augsburg Fortress.  
 Tune: AUS TIEFER NOT (87 87 887) Martin Luther, 1483–1546, alt.

*Paul recounts the tale of two men; the one brought sin and death into the world, the other brought life and victory.*

ROMANS 5:12<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—<sup>13</sup>for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

<sup>15</sup>But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! <sup>16</sup>Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. <sup>17</sup>For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup>Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. <sup>19</sup>For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

## VERSE OF THE DAY

**Manifest in making whole  
Palsied limbs and fainting soul;  
Manifest in valiant fight,  
Quelling all the devil's might;  
Manifest in gracious will,  
Ever bringing good from ill.  
Anthems be to you addressed,  
God in man made manifest. (82:3)**

## GOSPEL

Matthew 4:1-11

*The devil engages Jesus in a one-on-one battle of good versus evil. In a reversal of our First Lesson and a precursor of his triumph on Easter, Jesus defeats the devil by resisting all his temptations.*

MATTHEW 4:1<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup>The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

<sup>4</sup>Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup>"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

“ He will command his angels concerning you,  
and they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

<sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

<sup>8</sup>Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. <sup>9</sup>“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

<sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’ ”

<sup>11</sup>Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*After the reading of the Gospel the congregation responds:*



**C: Praise be to you, O Christ!**



“Man does not live  
on bread alone, but  
on every word that  
comes from the mouth  
of God.” Matthew 4:4

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

**200 – A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**



1 A might - y for - tress is our God, A trust - y shield  
 2 With might of ours can naught be done; Soon were our loss  
 3 Though dev - ils all the world should fill, All ea - ger to  
 4 The Word they still shall let re - main, Nor an - y thanks



and weap - on; He helps us free from ev - 'ry need  
 ef - fect - ed. But for us fights the val - iant one  
 de - vour us, We trem - ble not, we fear no ill;  
 have for it; He's by our side up - on the plain



That has us now o'er - tak - en. The old  
 Whom God him - self e - lect - ed. You ask,  
 They shall not o - ver - pow'r us. This world's  
 With his good gifts and Spir - it. And do



e - vil foe Now means dead - ly woe;  
 "Who is this?" Je - sus Christ it is,  
 prince may still Scowl fierce as he will,  
 what they will— Hate, steal, hurt, or kill—



Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight;  
 The al - might - y Lord. And there's no oth - er God;  
 He can harm us none. He's judged; the deed is done!  
 Though all may be gone, Our vic - to - ry is won;



On earth is not his e - qual.  
 He holds the field for - ev - er.  
 One lit - tle word can fell him.  
 The king - dom's ours for - ev - er!

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. composite.  
 Tune: EIN FESTE BURG (87 87 55 56 7) Martin Luther, 1483–1546.

✠ Sermon ✠

Matthew 4:1-11

## **Jesus Goes on the Offensive**

### **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

The Nicene Creed

**C 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.**

### **FRIENDSHIP REGISTER and GATHERING OF OFFERINGS**

### **MUSICAL OFFERING**

**✠ Prayers ✠**

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray to the Lord on behalf of ourselves and all people as they have need.

*Brief silence*

Merciful Father, though You created all things good, through our first parents we rebelled against Your goodness and, in pursuing our own way, came under the curse of sin and its death. We give You thanks for the mercy You showed to Your fallen creatures and for Your patience, until at the right time You sent forth Your Son as the new Adam to be our Savior and Redeemer. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, though sin left us isolated and alone, Your Son restored us to You and made us Your own children by Baptism and faith. Continue to give Your Church faithful pastors to speak Your Word and administer Your Sacraments. Give us faithful church workers to care for us in Your name. Grant that we may be kept in this faith, teach it to our children, and do the good works that show forth our identity as Your own people. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, though You gave us stewardship of Your good creation, we loved the gifts more than the Giver. Deliver us from our affluence, and save us from trusting in our possessions more than in Your Son. Teach us to use what You have provided to help those in need and to relieve the poor, the unemployed and the oppressed. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, though we deserve nothing of Your kindness, You have shown Yourself to be the strength of the weak, the healer of the sick and the hope of those who mourn. Hear us on behalf of those who are troubled in mind or body, the dying and those who grieve, *[especially...]* that in their afflictions and pain You may sustain and heal them according to Your gracious will and deliver them to everlasting life in Christ, our Savior. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, though we are unworthy of a place at the table of our Lord, You have bid us to come and receive Your Supper. Give to us faith, that we may come in repentance to receive this blessed food of everlasting life, and unite us in doctrine and holy living, that we may show forth this harmony in witness before the world. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, though we have lived too much in fear of the judgment of others, make us bold in heart so that we may speak Your Word confidently before those who do not yet know You. Open our hearts to generously supply the resources for Your Church to fulfill her calling, both here and throughout the world. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things, O merciful Father, and whatever else we need, we pray You to grant us for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**C 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.**

## ✠ The Sacrament ✠

### PREFACE and PROPER PREFACES

**M** The Lord be with you.



**C:** And al - so with you.

**M** Lift up your hearts.



**C:** We lift them up to the Lord.

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



**C:** It is right to give him thanks and praise.

**M** Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He made his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (*Sanctus*)



C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.



The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.



You are my God, and I will ex - alt you.



I will give you thanks, for you have be - come my sal -



va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.



The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

## 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, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

**M** The peace of the Lord be with you always.



C: A - men.

## O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD (*Agnus Dei*)



C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



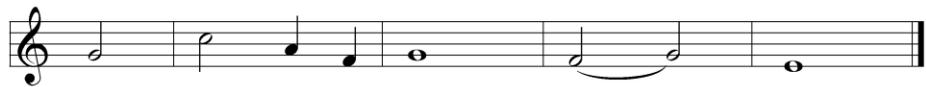
world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you



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

*The Scriptures teach that the celebration of the Lord's Supper connects us intimately with Christ and with one another as Christians who are united around a common confession of faith. Therefore, we ask that only those who are members of Calvary or churches within our fellowship come forward to receive the Lord's Supper.*



## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

## How Deep the Father's Love for Us

Words and Music: Stuart Townend

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Vs. 1 sung by cantors; vs. 2,3 congregation is invited to join cantors in singing



1. How deep the Fa - ther's love for us! How vast be - yond all  
2. Be - hold the Man up - on a cross, my sin up - on His  
3. I will not boast in an - y - thing; no gifts, no pow'r, no



mea - sure! That He should give His on - ly Son to  
should - ers. A - shamed I hear my mock - ing voice call  
wis - dom. But I will boast in Je - sus Christ, His



make a wretch His treas - ure! How great the pain of sear - ing loss! The  
out a - mong the scof - fers. It was His love that held Him there un -  
death and res - ur - rec - tion. Why should I gain from His re - ward? I



Fa - ther's Son for - sa - ken; As wounds which mar the  
til it was ac - com - plished. His dy - ing breath has  
can - not give an an - swer. But this I know with



Cho - sen One bring man - y sons to glo - ry.  
brought me life; I know that it is fin - ished.  
all my heart; His wounds have paid my ran - som.

## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

## 349 - Jesus, Priceless Treasure

Text: Johann Franck, 1618-77, abr.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.

JESU, MEINE FREUDE

Tune: Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

665 665 34 86



1 Je - sus, price - less trea - sure, Fount of pur - est  
 2 In thine arms I rest me; Foes who would mo -  
 3 Sa - tan, I de - fy thee; Death, I now de -  
 4 Hence, all earth - ly trea - sure! Je - sus is my  
 5 Hence, all fear and sad - ness! For the Lord of



plea - sure, Tru - est friend to me. Ah, how long  
 lest me Can - not reach me here. Though the earth  
 cry thee; Fear, I bid thee cease. World, thou shalt  
 plea - sure; Je - sus is my choice. Hence, all emp -  
 glad - ness, Je - sus, en - ters in. Those who love



in an - guish Shall my spir - it lan - guish,  
 be shak - ing, Ev - 'ry heart be quak - ing,  
 not harm me Nor thy threats a - larm me  
 ty glo - ry! Naught to me thy sto - ry  
 the Fa - ther, Though the storms may ga - ther,



Yearn - ing, Lord, for thee? Thou art mine, O  
 Je - sus calms my fear. Light - nings flash And  
 While I sing of peace. God's great pow'r Guards  
 Told with tempt - ing voice. Pain or loss Or  
 Still have peace with - in. Yea, whate - 'er I



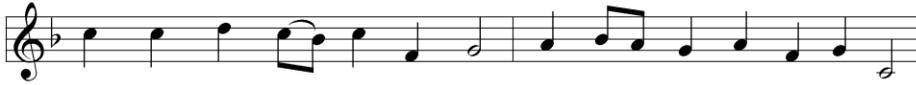
Lamb di - vine! I will suf - fer naught to  
 thun - ders crash; Yet, tho' sin and hell as -  
 ev - 'ry hour; Earth and all its depths a -  
 shame or cross Shall not from my Sav - ior  
 here must bear, Thou art still my pur - est



hide thee, Naught I ask be - side thee.  
 sail me, Je - sus will not fail me.  
 dore him, Si - lent bow be - fore him.  
 move me Since he deigns to love me.  
 plea - sure, Je - sus, price - less trea - sure!

## ✠ Sending ✠

### THANK THE LORD



C: Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-news his prom-is - es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

### PRAYER

**M** Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C: A - men.

### 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.



C: A - men. A - men. A - men.

**CLOSING HYMN**

368 – O Savior, Precious Savior



1 O Sav - ior, pre - cious Sav - ior, Whom, yet un -  
 2 O Bring - er of sal - va - tion, Who won - drous -  
 3 In thee all full - ness dwell - eth, All grace and  
 4 Oh, grant the con - sum - ma - tion Of this our



seen, we love, O name of might and fa - vor, All  
 ly hast wrought, Thy - self the rev - e - la - tion Of  
 pow'r di - vine; The glo - ry that ex - cel - leth, O  
 song a - bove In end - less ad - o - ra - tion And



oth - er names a - bove, We wor - ship thee; we bless thee;  
 love be - yond our thought, We wor - ship thee; we bless thee;  
 Son of God, is thine. We wor - ship thee; we bless thee;  
 ev - er - last - ing love! Then shall we praise and bless thee



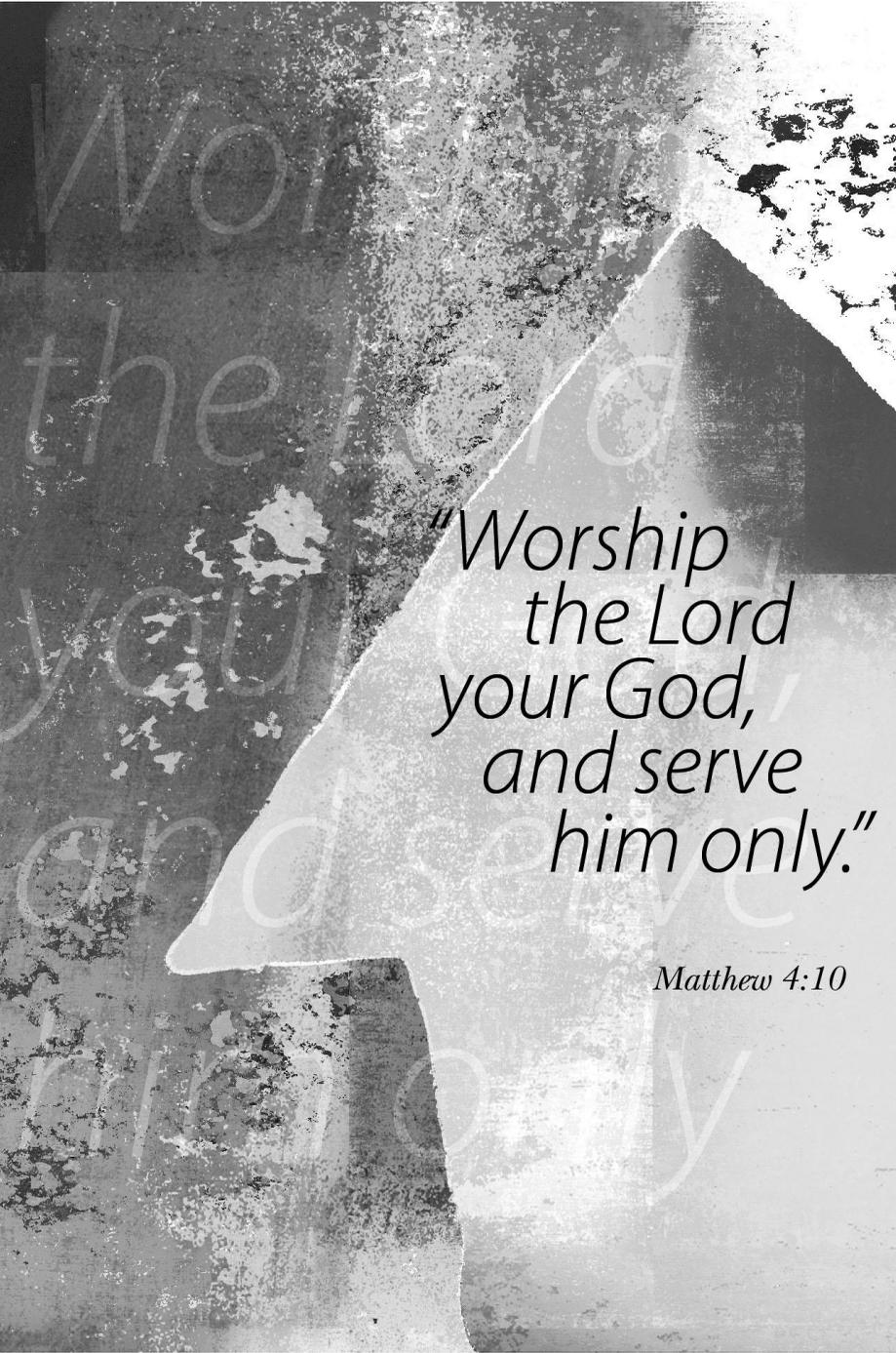
To thee, O Christ, we sing; We praise thee  
 To thee, O Christ, we sing; We praise thee  
 To thee, O Christ, we sing; We praise thee  
 Where per - fect prais - es ring And ev - er -



and con - fess thee, Our ho - ly Lord and King.  
 and con - fess thee, Our gra - cious Lord and King.  
 and con - fess thee, Our glo - rious Lord and King.  
 more con - fess thee, Our Sav - ior and our King.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–79, alt.  
 Tune: ANGEL'S STORY (76 76 D) Arthur H. Mann, 1850–1929.

*After worship, please feel free to stay and greet your neighbors.*



*"Worship  
the Lord  
your God,  
and serve  
him only."*

*Matthew 4:10*

## THE SEASON IN LENT

The prepositions used in the Church Year are important. The Church just finished the season “*after* the Epiphany”. In six weeks, the Church will begin celebrating the Sunday “*of* Easter”. Currently, the Church is walking through the Sundays “*in* Lent.” Note that the Sundays are not designated as Sundays *of* Lent, but *in* Lent. That’s because the Sundays themselves are not considered part of the forty days but are islands of refreshment in our Lenten walk. Every Sunday is a “little Easter”, and so it remains even within the Lenten season.

Though the readings on the Sundays in Lent anticipate the victory of Easter, the Church’s Lenten worship is muted and quiet. For centuries, the Church has omitted her most jubilant songs of praise during this season of repentance. Worship planners may omit the use of “Alleluia” until Easter. The Song of Praise may also be omitted to reflect the somber nature of the season.

The Season (not the Sundays) of Lent leads the Church on a forty-day journey of repentance and prayer, of remembrance and renewal of our baptism. God calls to mankind: Return to the Lord! Many congregations use the midweek Lenten services to meditate on the Passion of our Lord in their journey through Lent. The Passion of our Lord, however, is not a somber funeral procession, but a triumphant journey to the cross and through the empty tomb. For that reason, the focus of the season is not Good Friday, but Easter.

Each of the three years of the Church Year cycle emphasizes one of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) with readings from John interspersed throughout each of the years. The Church Year 2019/2020 follows the readings appointed for Year A (confer *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*, page 163) with Gospel lessons predominantly from Matthew.

## OUR WORSHIP SERIES: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CHRIST

During the Sundays within Lent we follow Jesus, the Christ, as he faces the challenges or challengers placed in his path on the way to our salvation. One challenger is Satan, others are people Jesus meets on the way, another is a person no longer alive. These instances aren’t Jesus speaking to the crowds, but they are **Close Encounters with the Christ**. In each case, the Christ is victorious, anticipating his great victory on Easter.

## OUR THEME FOR TODAY:

### CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CHRIST: CHRIST AND SATAN

The contrast between the First Lesson and the Gospel is stark. The first Adam is created in righteousness and holiness; nonetheless, he falls for the temptation of the devil in the garden. The second Adam is also righteous and holy; however, he does NOT fall for Satan’s schemes. This close encounter with the Christ is the most dramatic of them all as Jesus and Satan go head to head in the wilderness. The ultimate victory of Jesus through the cross and empty tomb is already foreshadowed in the victory of the Christ over the devil’s temptations in this incident from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry.