

Lenten Midweek Service 6

March 21, 2018 – 6:30 P.M.

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Afton, Minnesota

Living Lent: “The Vulture Reveals a Coming Savior”

A Lenten OpeningMelody: “O Sacred Head” (*Stand.*)

Remember, earth-born mortal, the dust from which you came,
And know that life’s last portal returns you to the same!
Let ashes tell the story, from dust its lesson learn:
Beyond life’s fleeting glory to dust you shall return!

Like flow’rs cast in the furnace, our lives are quickly spent.
To dust, O God, You turn us and call us to repent:
“Turn back, O mortals, grieving o’er your iniquity,
That, steadfast love receiving, you may My mercy see.”

For you, O gracious Father, want not the sinner’s death,
But that we, turning, rather may breathe the Spirit’s breath.
Let true repentance holy our daily lives employ,
That we may trust You solely and find in You our joy.

O God, You once did fashion our lives from earth’s frail dust.
Through Jesus’ Cross and Passion help us Your grace to trust.
For Christ was born of Mary our mortal dust to share,
Our sin and guilt to carry, our ransom to prepare.

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P “Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed season, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But My people do not know the requirements of the Lord.”

C Because of our sin, “the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.”

P Let us therefore confess our sins to God, sincerely repent of them and seek His mercy.

C Holy God, as surely as the circling vulture reveals the presence of a carcass, so the signs of Your return are everywhere. Yet I often ignore them, and avoid preparing for Your coming. I am Your child in my baptism, but I have lived as though You and my neighbor did not matter. I have broken all Your laws in my heart, in my words, and in my actions. My sin is my fault and no one else's. God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

P "Even now," declares the Lord, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity."

Accomplish Your salvation in us, most gracious Lord,
Through Jesus' Cross and Passion, according to Your Word.
Let us show forth Your favor while in the world we live,
And with Your saints forever eternal life receive.

P Lift up your hearts and rejoice! God has heard your cry for mercy and seen your sorrow for sin. His own word promises that "he who believes and is baptized shall be saved," and that "if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." By the command of my Lord Jesus Christ and in His stead, I therefore announce to you the forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now, go, and bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance.

C Amen. Thanks be to God!

Psalm 79Gethsemane 77 77 77 (*Be seated.*)

(In this styling, phrases of the hymn interrupt the reading of the Psalm. The tune is introduced before the reader's first line. The final chord of each phrase is held softly over the spoken words.)

P O God, the heathen have invaded Your land. They have defiled Your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. They left the bodies of Your people for the vultures, the bodies of Your servants for wild animals to eat.

To You, Lord, our prayers arise,
As the vultures fill the skies.

P They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and no one was left to bury the dead. We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us.

Poured like water on the ground,
See, the blood of Israel found.

P How long, O Lord? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealous wrath burn like fire? Do not remember against us the iniquities of our ancestors; have mercy on us now, for we have lost all hope. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; deliver us, and forgive our sins, for Your name's sake.

Cast our guilt of sin away.
Lead us, Lord, to mercy's day.

Holy GospelMatthew 24: 27-28 (*Stand.*)

Pastor: ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as ²⁸ far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

Theme HymnMelody: Erhalt uns, Herr (*Be seated.*)

When vultures circle well we know beneath them sits the carrion crow,
Awaiting death's cruel table spread—the dying feast will soon be dead.

O coming Christ, O living Lord, Your “soon return” can't be ignored,
For signs will spread across the sky, announcing that our King is nigh.

Grant us, O Christ, such watchful hearts, and eager, as Your grace imparts,
To scan the skies for Your return. Our waiting hearts with yearning burn.

Homily: The Vulture Reveals a Coming Savior

Offering

(Note to our visitors: You are our guests this evening! Please do not feel the need to make a contribution to our Offering. We would ask all visitors and members to sign the Register Pad as the Offering is being collected. Also, Prayer Cards are available in the pew racks for special intercessions during the time of congregational prayer.)

Create in me a heart that's pure. Renew my spirit, steadfast, sure.

Offering

Offering Prayer.....Melody: Dunstan (*Stand.*)

Create in me a heart that's pure. Renew my spirit, steadfast, sure.
Deliver me from sin's allure. Accept the gifts I bring.

Forgive me all my shameful wrong. Restore to me salvation's song,
That I may join the grateful throng. Accept the gifts I bring.

Then I shall see Christ's glorious face, alive forever by His grace,
Dwelling in that most holy place. Accept the gifts I bring.

Prayers of God's People

Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

P Ask the animals, and they will teach you. Let every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them sing,

C Which of these does not know that the Lord has done this?

P Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint.

C Remember Him—before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the Spirit returns to God who gave it.

P The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.

C Amen.

Closing VerseMelody: Erhalt uns, Herr

The animals the story tell. Teach us, O Lord, to learn it well,
And lead us, as our days are spent, to live in love while living Lent.

(Be seated.)