



## ***In Community with Creation***



***1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent***

**February 21, 2021**

*Reaching Out in Christian Love to All*

1375 Highway 210

Huxley, IA 50124

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## First Sunday of Lent February 21, 2021

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.

\*=Stand as you are able    **Bold Print** = congregation responds  
**ELW**=Red Evangelical Lutheran Worship

Ringling of the Bell and Prelude

**GATHERING** *The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

### **\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.  
Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion**

**forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

**\*GATHERING SONG      “Morning has Broken”      ELW 556**

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# Morning Has Broken



1 Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; black - bird has  
 2 Sweet the rain's new fall, sun - lit from heav - en, like the first  
 3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing, born of the



spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the  
 dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet  
 one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - 'ry



morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!  
 gar - den, sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass,  
 morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BUNESSAN, Gaelic tune; arr. hymnal version

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## **\*GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## **Week 1 - In community with creation**

Mark 4:35-41 *Jesus calms a storm*

The Sunday readings for Lent 1, year B highlight the destructive power of the flood as well as the power of God's promise represented there. In the gospel reading Jesus is with the wild animals in the wilderness. While we often think of community as limited to *human* beings, our human existence is interdependent with all the created world. This theme is especially apparent in Mark 4:35-41, the account of the fishermen whose lives depend on the sea but who become afraid of its power in the storm.

**Active Engagement Together** – *Discuss the following two questions with someone around you. Continue your reflection this week with friends, family and coworkers.*

**What is one way our lives endanger creation?**

**What is one way our lives enrich creation?**

*At the sound of the bell, we will gather together, pray and light the first candle.*

Let us pray.

**Gracious Creator, you fashioned us in your image in the midst of a world beyond our knowledge and understanding. Continue to weave us together in community with all created things, and deepen our awareness of the ways you connect us to the earth. In Jesus' name we pray.**

**Amen.**

**WORD** *God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

## **FIRST READING: Genesis 9:8-17**

*Today's reading is the conclusion to the flood story. Because of human sin, God destroys the earth by flood, saving only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. Yet divine destruction gives way to divine commitment. As in the first creation, God blesses humanity and establishes a covenant with all creatures.*

<sup>8</sup>God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>"As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." <sup>12</sup>God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:18-22**

*As God acted through Christ's suffering and death to bring us to God, so God acts through baptism to save us from a sinful existence. This spiritual cleansing marks our new life in Christ.*

<sup>18</sup>Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL: Mark 4:35-41**

The holy gospel according to Mark the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus' calming of the storm on the sea reveals his power over evil, since the sea represents evil and chaos. The boat on the sea is a symbol of the church and invites us to trust God amid life's turbulence.*

<sup>35</sup>When evening had come, [Jesus said to the disciples,] “Let us go across to the other side.” <sup>36</sup>And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup>A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” <sup>39</sup>He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup>He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no

faith?” <sup>41</sup>And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE – *Please stay in your seats/pews***

**SERMON**


**HYMN OF THE DAY “Take My Life, That I May Be” ELW 583**

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–1879, adapt.; Spanish text: Vicente Mendoza, 1875–1955; Music: William Dexheimer Pharris, b. 1956; arr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954  
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# Take My Life, That I May Be *Toma, oh Dios, mi voluntad*

*Refrain/Estribillo*




To - ma, oh Dios, mi vo - lun - tad, y haz - la tu - ya, na -  
Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord,



da más; to - ma, sí, mi co - ra - zón  
to thee; take my mo - ments and my days;



y tu tro - no en él ten - drás, ten - drás.  
let them flow in cease - less praise, less praise.



1 Que mi vi - da en - te - ra es - té  
1 Take my hands and let them move  
2 Take my sil - ver and my gold,  
3 Take my voice and let me sing  
4 Take my will and make it thine;



con - sa - gra - da a ti, Se - ñor;  
at the im - pulse of thy love;  
not a mite would I with - hold;  
al - ways, on - ly for my King;  
it shall be no lon - ger mine;



que a mis ma - nos pue - da guiar el im -  
take my feet and let them be swift and  
take my in - tel - lect and use ev - 'ry  
take my lips and let them be filled with  
take my heart, it is thine own; it shall

*Refrain/Estribillo*



pul - so de tu a - mor:  
beau - ti - ful for thee.  
pow'r as thou shalt choose.  
mes - sag - es from thee.  
be thy roy - al throne.

2 Que mis pies tan sólo en pos  
de lo santo puedan ir,  
y que a ti, Señor, mi voz,  
se complazca en bendecir. Estribillo

3 Que mis labios al hablar  
hablen sólo de tu amor;  
que mis bienes dedicar  
yo los quiera a ti, Señor. Estribillo

4 Que mi tiempo todo, esté  
consagrado a tu loor;  
que mi mente y su poder  
sean usados en tu honor. Estribillo

## **\*APOSTLES' CREED**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.**

**Amen.**

## **\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

In Jesus your realm has come near to us in every place and time.  
Give your church throughout the world a spirit of humility and repentance; teach us to trust always in the good news of your salvation.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You have made a covenant of mercy with every living creature. Protect all the earth’s creatures from destruction. Empower the work of biologists, conservationists, and science educators.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

All your paths are steadfast love and faithfulness. Direct the words and actions of leaders in our community and throughout the world, that they may maintain justice for the lowly.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Even in the wilderness you are with us. Walk alongside migrants and refugees crossing dangerous lands. Tend to those whose lives feel desolate. Give healing and strength to all who suffer (*especially*):

<b>Prayer Requests:</b>	Tyler Anderson	Anita Brendeland
Joan Carson	Alisha Cox	Bev Echtenkamp
Jackie Greene	Dolores Hauge	Christa Hartsook
Phyl Hughes	Warren Johnson	Kevin Klingbeil
Alvina Larson	Ardell Lundgren	Merlin Lyon
Mary Martin	Loree Ness	Karen New
Roy Paradise	Deidre Qual	Harold Rittgers
Shannon Tope	Joyce Volz	Sarah JoAnn Young
Phil Zeller		

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

In the covenant of baptism you claim us as beloved children. Nurture us in our baptismal identity and teach us to live within it for the sake of others. Strengthen this congregation’s ministries of care and concern (*especially*):

**Family & friends of:** Angie Claude, Arlene Wee, Judy Smith, Sharon Mortenson, Valerie Brendeland, Sue Ihle, Ralph Kalsem, Dean Simmons, Charles Brendeland, Tanner Houseman, Jimmy Young, Darrell Rout, John Maier, Travis Ellis, John Johnson, Mae Rivard, Doris Ness, Nathan Stupka, Bart Mason, Lowell Elliott, Kaytie Anderson, Harold Long, Debbie Bollmeyer, Linda Lantz

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

In baptism you join us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We praise you for all those who have died trusting in your faithfulness. Bring us with them to the fullness of your reign.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL** *God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## **OFFERING**

*Hymn of the Month:*     **“God Loved the World”**

**ELW 323**

Text: Gesangbuch, Bollhagen, 1791; tr. August Crull, 1846–1923, alt.; Music: Edward Miller, 1731–1807, adapt. Public domain.

## God Loved the World

1 God loved the world so that he gave his on - ly  
 2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith, who was made  
 3 If you are ill, if death draws near, this truth your  
 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son, for - gives all  
 5 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly

Son the lost to save that all who would in  
 flesh and suf - fered death; all who con - fide in  
 trou - bled heart can cheer: Christ Je - sus res - cues  
 sins that you have done, and jus - ti - fied by  
 Spir - it, Three in One! To you, O bless - ed

him be - lieve should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.  
 Christ a - lone are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.  
 us from death; that is the firm - est ground of faith.  
 Je - sus' blood, your bap - tism grants the high - est good.  
 Trin - i - ty, be praise now and e - ter - nal - ly!

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Bollbagen, 1791; tr. August Crall, 1846–1923, alt.  
 Music: ROCKINGHAM OLD, Edward Miller, 1731–1807, adap.

## **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

**God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone,  
but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your  
gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus  
Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

### **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who on this day overcame death and the grave,  
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of  
everlasting life.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn (spoken):

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest,  
hosanna in the highest.**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

**\*LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

## COMMUNION

### **Holy Communion Distribution for Today**

1. ***Congregation will remain seated and commune from their seats using the prepackaged wafers and cups.***
2. ***Ushers, Musicians and Technology ministers will commune with the congregation from their seats together with the Pastor.***
3. ***Pastor will do a children's blessing while children remain in the pews with the help of parents.***
4. ***Please dispose of empty communion cups in trash after service.***

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**Amen.**

## \*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

**Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

**SENDING** *God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*



## \*BLESSING

The Creator who fashions us together with all things,  
the Christ who leads us into a new beloved community,  
the Spirit who holds us in the communion of saints,  
one God, ✠ bless you now and always..

**Amen.**

## SENDING SONG “Go, My Children, With My Blessing” ELW 543

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, b. 1919, alt.; Music: Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan;  
Williams, 1872–1958; Text © 1983 Concordia Publishing House; Arr. © Oxford  
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### Go, My Children, with My Blessing



- 1 “Go, my chil - dren, with my bless-ing, nev - er a - lone.
- 2 “Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.
- 3 “Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me.



Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.  
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.  
Grow in love and love by serv-ing, joy - ful and free.



In my love's bap-tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for-ev - er.  
Here you heard my dear Son's sto - ry, here you touched him, saw his glo - ry.  
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here my ten - der com-fort stilled you.



Go, my chil - dren, with my bless-ing, you are my own."  
Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure."  
Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free."

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, b. 1919, alt.  
Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional  
Text © 1983 Concordia Publishing House

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### \*DISMISSAL

Go in peace, joined together in Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

Ring of the Bell

Postlude

For streaming and printing:

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### **Those Serving in Today's Service**

Pastor: Eric Klimpel

Accompanist: Mindy DeVries

Youth Liaison: Nels Dovre

*Technicians:* Brent Emerson, Austin Klimpel

### **This Week at Palestine**

Today, February 21, 2021 *First Sunday of Lent*

8:00 a.m. ZOOM Dawn Dialog

9:30 a.m. Worship; Holy Communion (*Live streamed*)

10:45 a.m. First Communion Class

Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

6:30 p.m. ZOOM Bible study

Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study

12:00 noon ZOOM Prayer time

1:00 p.m. Quilters

5:30 p.m. Light dinner?

6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Confirmation

7:00 p.m. Midweek Lenten service

Sunday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 *Second Sunday of Lent*

9:30 a.m. Worship; (*Live streamed*)

10:45 a.m. First Communion Class

Lectionary texts: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

### **Thank you for your Gifts for Ministry**

THANK YOU!!! We celebrate your generosity and thank you in advance for your support as we strive to reach our average weekly offering goal of \$4,825 for current expenses and \$68 for benevolence.

**Southeastern Iowa Synod E-News Prayer:** Renewed, claimed and sent forth through the word and the waters of baptism, we pray that our life in the Spirit will help us resist temptations that draw us away from God and God's ways and will keep us focused on our baptismal journey of faith, learning, service and sharing the good news.

## **Tithes & Offering**

Palestine will accept your offering!

1. **Bring** to worship service with you and place in offering plates.
2. **Mail** check to:  
Palestine Lutheran Church  
1375 HWY 210  
Huxley, IA 50124
3. **Give online through Easy Tithe.**

Go to our website [www.plchuxley.com](http://www.plchuxley.com) and click on the bright red ONLINE GIVING tab on the right located above our "Reaching out in Christian love to all" statement.

*Thank you. Continue to pray and know God is with us.*



**Southeastern Iowa Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

All rostered ministers and members of congregations are invited to a discussion of the anti-racism statement approved by the synod council this summer.

Go to their website @ <https://seiasynod.org/> to [Read the statement](#)

This will be a two-part discussion. Please register and plan on attending both parts.

Sunday, Feb. 21 and Sunday, Mar. 7 4:00 PM. [Register online](#)



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[www.RiversideLBC.org](http://www.RiversideLBC.org)

"To Know Christ and make Christ known to all."

### Upcoming Events

March 5-7 Marriage Retreat

April 10 Junior's Spring Blast

March 27 Riverside Gala & Auction

April 17 Spring Volunteer Work Day

April 23-25 Men's Retreat



## **Relaunching VBS in 2021**

**Join us on a journey to Mars and Beyond as we explore where God's power can take us!**

- Our mission will take place June 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Palestine Lutheran Church.
- Registration details will be provided in April.
- Seeking volunteers – many different roles to fill.

Contact Candi Engler ([volley\\_602@hotmail.com](mailto:volley_602@hotmail.com)) if you are interested.

## LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF PERSONAL CARE KITS



This Lent, we're putting God's love in action by making Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits. The loss and uncertainty of COVID-19 hit our poorest neighbors around the world even harder. We, ourselves, are restless after a year of wandering in the wilderness of a pandemic. We want to be the hands and feet of Christ for our siblings. We're ready to DO something, and are excited to engage in this project as a community during our Lenten journey this year.

We will be assembling these kits at home during the 5 weeks of Lent. Here's what you will need:

1. 2 Bars of soap (4 to 5 oz. any brand in original wrapping)
2. 1 Bath towel (light-weight maximum 52" x 27", dark color recommended)
3. 1 Toothbrush (adult size, in original packaging)
4. 1 Comb
5. 1 Nail clipper (metal, attached file optional)

**If you would like to use this list as a devotional and collect each item each week as a family (think one item per person in household) you may!**

Devotions for Offering will go to postage, items to put together additional care kits. Personal Care Kits will be collected on Palm Sunday (3/28).

**Until Your Love  
Reaches Every Neighbor**



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



# Lent



## Overview

The invitation to Lent spoken on Ash Wednesday reminds us that we enter this season together “with the whole church” (see the Leaders Edition to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 617). It goes on to state that “we are created for communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation.” Though many common Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of “repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love,” Lent is also a time for deepening of community.

In the early church, the weeks before Easter were a time in which the whole community took responsibility for the training of catechumens. Not only were the catechumens enriched by this formation, but those already within the community were strengthened in their faith along with them.

Using readings from Mark’s gospel, this series invites the assembly to reflect on what it means to be in community with one another, with the world, with creation, and with God.



### Legend of the Circle of Friends

The Circle of Friends is a candle holder with a legend still shrouded in great mystery. It is said that when you give the candle holder to a friend, that it will solidify your bond with that person for the rest of your

lives. The interlocked arms of the figures are meant to be symbolic of the bond shared between close friends.

Mayan Indian legend is where the Circle of Friends story originates. The clay candle holders that have made it to modern times are based on ancient groups celebrating around actual bonfires; dancing and sharing stories of each other's good qualities and becoming closer to one another. Our Circle of Friends candle holder pottery ranges from 3 to 7 people and come in a variety of muted, earthy tones. While some others are made with modern materials, those from Sunland Home Decor are only made with clay similar to those of ancient times.

The mood created by this unique art piece is that of warmth and friendship. When a tealight or votive candle is placed in the center it casts shadows around the room that appear to dance along with the flame.

Jesus created a circle of followers whom he labelled as friends. He called them friends because he revealed to them the mission and purpose for which he came. And shared them the struggles and burdens that he bore in his earthly ministry. Jesus invited them into the vastness of his inner personal life and celebrated with them joy and sorrow. Friendships are relationships that you choose and foster while family is what you are born into and involve other people's network of relations and choices.

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup>I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me but I chose you."* John 15:12-16

**Welcome to Worship!** We're glad you're here (physically or virtually), guests and members alike, and pray that you will find in our worship an opportunity to praise God and hear God's Word.

All baptized Christians who believe that Christ Jesus is truly present in the sacrament to forgive, strengthen and bless us, are welcome to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

### **Secure Even When It's Not Safe (Based on Mark 1:9-15)**

The world is unsafe in countless ways. It contains wilderness after wilderness, places where temptation and danger seem to reign. Struggle, pain, fear, violence, hate, death, and suffering are all part of the uncertain world that we wake to each day.

Today, the Gospel of Mark discusses Jesus' own encounter with the wilderness. After he was baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus was driven into the desert wilderness, where he was tempted by Satan for forty days. What's more, when Jesus left the wilderness to re-enter society, he encountered another kind of dangerous wilderness, a world where John the Baptist had just been arrested for confronting Herod Antipas and his wife Herodias with some hard-hitting truth.

After forty days of temptation, Jesus was met by yet another temptation: to play it safe in a world that had just silenced his friend for doing exactly the kind of thing that Jesus came to do. Despite the risk posed by worldly power players like Herod, Jesus proceeded to teach, heal, and spread the good news of God's kingdom. Despite the danger, Jesus trusted in the promise that God's love was bigger than the wilderness of human wiles.

The world is not safe, and believing in Jesus does not change this fact. However, we are secure in an unsafe world because of the promises made by God in baptism. Think of children who are secure in the love of their parents. They may go to school and face bullies—a painful experience, for sure—but they are less likely to trust the lies of the bullies because they know a deeper truth about themselves, a truth instilled by the love of their parents. So it is with us. There is danger and wilderness all around, but we are secure in the truth of our baptism: we are God's beloved children, with whom God is well pleased. Grounded in this secure love, we derive courage to set out into the wild.