

**First Lutheran Church
Findlay OH**



THE MUSTARD SHRUB

Mark's gospel turns upside down the ancient image of the tree of life: the mustard bush is no great tree, but rather an annual plant. In Lent we gather around the cross, which is like a mere mustard bush. Yet we see it as our tree of life, taking nest in its branches and being nourished by baptismal waters.

GATHERING

Congregational Responses in Bold Print

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Amazing Grace* HOBBY

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who is present, who gives life, who calls into existence the things that do not exist. Amen.

*If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand? Yet with you is forgiveness, and so we confess.
Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned away from you, knowingly and unknowingly. We have wandered from your resurrection life. We have strayed from your love for all people. Turn us back to you, O God. Give us new hearts and right spirits, that we may find what is pleasing to you and dwell in your house forever. Amen.

Receive good news: God turns to you in love. "I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live," says our God. All your sin is forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ, who is the free and abounding gift of God's grace for you. Amen.

HYMN #679 ***For the Fruit of All Creation*** AR HYD Y NOS

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.
For these gifts to ev'ry nation, thanks be to God.
For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,
Future needs in earth's safe-keeping, thanks be to God.

2 In the just reward of labor, God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done.
In our world-wide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

3 For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,
Most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

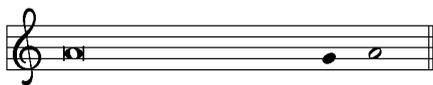
GREETING

Behold, now is the acceptable time;
now is the day of salvation.

Gather us, O God, around the cross of Christ,
and make it for us the tree of life.

May the fruits of this tree feed the hungry,
and may its leaves heal the nations.

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



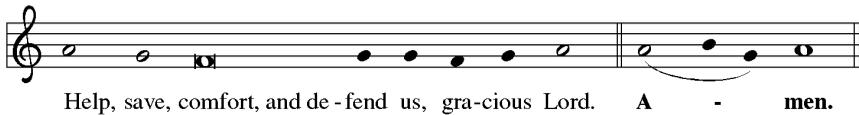
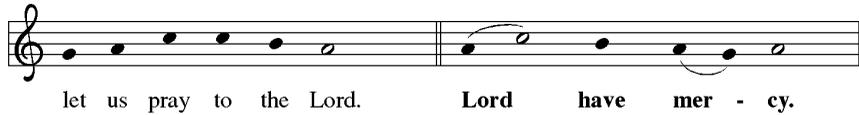
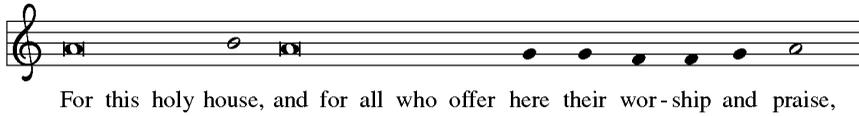
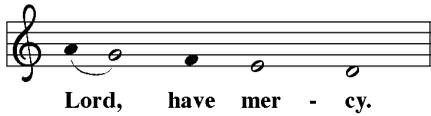
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together. Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

HOLY GOSPEL

*The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the 4th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.***

GOSPEL **Mark 4: 26-34**

The mustard bush is a tree of life only in a hidden way.

²⁶ [Jesus said to the crowds] “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸ The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰ He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON *Rev. Robert Cochran*

HYMN OF THE DAY #635 *We Walk by Faith* SHANTI

**We walk by faith, and not by sight;
with gracious words draw near
O Christ, who spoke who spoke
as none e'er spoke: "My peace be with you here"**

**We may not touch your hands and side,
Nor follow where you trod;
But in you promise we rejoice,
And cry, "My Lord and God!"**

**Help then, O Lord, our unbelief:
And may our faith abound,
To call on you when you are near,
And seek where you are found.
That, when our life of faith is done,**

NICENE CREED

With voices united, let us confess our faith

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 truly 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 with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic 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.

THE PRAYERS

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

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.

SENDING

BLESSING

Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation. Holy God, speaking, spoken, and inspiring, ✠ bless you, unbind you, and send you in love and in peace. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *Bless Now, O God, the Journey* CULLI