



By Arden W. Mead

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Order of Service for the First Wednesday in Lent

February 24, 2021

Paradise!

Call to Worship: "Just As I Am" Handbell Quartet

Opening Hymn: "Words that Last Forever" *sung to #606 ELW*

With words that last forever you speak in richest grace,  
Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior, upon your cross disgraced.

With open ears I listen, with open mind believe,  
With heart embrace you: I, Lord, your words receive.

"Forgiveness" granted sinners, and "Paradise, today!"

"Behold your son, your mother!" to family you say.

The air is split with anguish in your "Forsaken" cry.

As "Thirsty," work "Accomplished," in "Father's hands" you die.

Pray, sanctify the silence with which I contemplate  
Your boundless love for sinners, your sacrifices so great,

**Till at the tomb I waken to your new word for me:  
These words, not last, but lasting, shall ring eternally!**

### **Approaching the Word**

**P:** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

**C:** **“Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

**P:** The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

**C:** **“Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

**P:** The Lord sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

**C:** **“Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

**P:** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

**C:** **“Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

**P:** “The word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return to me empty,” says the Lord. “It shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

**C:** **“Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

### **Prayer of the Day**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** **And also with you.**

*Honk your horns to greet one another.*

**P:** Let us pray.

**All:** **O God of Eden, you desire to open paradise for your children. Through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the way to eternal life is forever unbarred. Lead us, we pray, through this Lenten wilderness to the Easter garden of your steadfast love and acceptance. Open our ears to your cry of command, to the archangel’s call, to the sound of your trumpet! Through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**Anthem: “Fix Me Jesus” Kyla Betts, Soloist**

### **First Lesson: Genesis 2:4-17**

This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created.<sup>4-7</sup> At the time GOD made Earth and Heaven, before any grasses or shrubs had sprouted from the ground—GOD hadn't yet sent rain on Earth, nor was there anyone around to work the ground (the whole Earth was watered by underground springs)—GOD formed Man out of dirt from the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. The Man came alive—a living soul! <sup>8-</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Then GOD planted a garden in Eden, in the east. He put the Man he had just made in it. GOD made all kinds of trees grow from the ground, trees beautiful to look at and good to eat. The Tree-of-Life was in the middle of the garden, also the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. <sup>10-14</sup> A river flows out of Eden to water the garden and from there divides into four rivers. The first is named Pishon; it flows through Havilah where there is gold. The gold of this land is good. The land is also known for a sweet-scented resin and the onyx stone. The second river is named Gihon; it flows through the land of Cush. The third river is named Hiddekel and flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates. <sup>15</sup> GOD took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order. <sup>16-</sup> <sup>17</sup> GOD commanded the Man, “You can eat from any tree in the garden, except from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Don't eat from it. The moment you eat from that tree, you're dead.”

### **Responsive Psalmody: Psalm 16**

**P:** Protect me, O God; I trust in your for safety.

**C:** I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord, all the good things I have come from you.”

**P:** I praise the Lord, because he guides me, and in the night my conscience warns me.

**C:** I am always aware of the Lord's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.

**P:** And so I am thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure,

**C:** because you protect me from the power of death.

**P:** I have served you faithfully,

**C:** and you will not abandon me to the world of the dead.

**P:** You will show me the path that leads to life.

**C:** Your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever.

**Theme Hymn, vs. 1: “Our Savior Speaks in Love”** *sung to Southwell SM*

**Our Savior speaks in love**

**To sinners in their need.**

**Oh, hear the message from above;**

**His gracious promise heed.**

**Gospel: John 14: 1-6**

<sup>1-4</sup> “Don’t let this rattle you. You trust God, don’t you? Trust me. There is plenty of room for you in my Father’s home. If that weren’t so, would I have told you that I’m on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I’m on my way to get your room ready, I’ll come back and get you so you can live where I live. And you already know the road I’m taking.” <sup>5</sup> Thomas said, “Master, we have no idea where you’re going. How do you expect us to know the road?” <sup>6-7</sup> Jesus said, “I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You’ve even seen him!”

**Children’s Word**

**Theme Hymn, vs. 2: “Our Savior Speaks in Love”** *sung to Southwell SM*

**His wondrous pity see!**

**Unto the thief he cries:**

**“Today, I tell you, you will be**

**With me in Paradise.”**

**Homily: “Paradise”**

**Hymn: “Jesus, Jesus, Pitying the Sighs”** *sung to Ack, Vad Ar Dock Livet Har 777 6*

Jesus, pitying the sighs  
Of the thief, who near you dies,  
Promising him paradise:  
Hear us, holy Jesus.

May we in our guilt and shame  
Still your love and mercy claim,  
Calling humbly on your name:  
Hear us, holy Jesus.

May our hearts to you incline  
And their thoughts your cross entwine.  
Cheer our souls with hope divine:  
Hear us, holy Jesus.

### **Prayers of the Church**

*Honk your horn three times as part of the congregation's response to each petition.*

**P:** The King of kings and Lord of lords has drawn near to us in mercy. He listens to our cries for hope. Therefore, let us join in fervent prayer:

**C: Lord, remember us in your kingdom.**

**P:** That by the lives of God's people, in this congregation and beyond, the world may see a demonstration of the good and gracious rule of God, let us join in fervent prayer.

**C: Lord, remember us in your kingdom.**

**P:** That the rulers of this world may acknowledge themselves to be agents of the King of kings, and may seek to administer their realms in accordance with his royal will, let us join in fervent prayer:

**C: Lord, remember us in your kingdom.**

**P:** That none may feel themselves excluded from the goodly reign of God, especially those who stand in want or need, in sickness or sorrow, abandoned or alone, let us join in fervent prayer.

**C: Lord, remember us in your kingdom.**

**P:** And that Christ, who came to claim us as his own, may come again to take us to himself, that all who trust in him may reign with him forever and ever, let us join in fervent prayer:

**C: Lord, remember us in your kingdom.**

**P:** Amen.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**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.

**Benediction**

**P:** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you  
and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.  
Your Savior has opened paradise—even for you, even today.

**C:** Amen.

**Theme Hymn, vs. 3: “Our Savior Speaks in Love”** *sung to Southwell SM*

**Our Savior speaks; may we  
Give heed to ev’ry word,  
And grace be given faithfully  
To trust what we have heard.**

**Postlude: “At the Cross”**