

## Lenten Wednesday Worship

*The following order of worship will be live on Facebook at 12:15PM and will be available shared on Facebook afterwards. For those without Facebook, I hope these prayers will be of comfort to you. You are deeply missed and always in our prayers. Pastor Christine*

**Welcome:** It is the time of Lent, where we prepare for the great Easter promise. Never did we think Lent would be like this, that we would be locked away from each other for the safety of all concerned. It is not the time we chose, but it is the time we have. Therefore, in our remaining weeks of this practice we call Lent, you will find that our theme has been altered. Some of us are finding we are barely hanging on to the hem of Jesus' cloak, longing for healing, grasping for answers, and fearful of the future. And yet, even now, the passage of death to life that our Lord traveled is the same journey we travel. It's the here, but not yet moment, knowing that our time of being reunited will come, just as the Easter life will. Blessings dear friends! Peace be with you.

**Greeting:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Prayer:** O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**Scripture:** Open a Bible to the book of Philippians 2:5-11

**Message:** If you are unable to watch the message online, consider the following thoughts:

- Where do you see people in the world and in yourself "being of the same mind as Christ Jesus"?
- How does your tongue confess Jesus Christ as Lord in what you say and do in your life *today*?
- How has the death of Jesus brought life to you?

**Prayer:** You are invited to light a candle as you pray. Consider that your prayers rise as incense to a loving God, The petition for this week is “Hear us O God, your mercy is great.” As you craft the prayers that are in your heart at this moment, consider praying for the following after a brief time of silence or contemplation:

- Hospitals, nursing homes, other health care facilities
- The Centers for Disease Control, The World Health Organization; Medical researchers and scientists
- Calm to children who are fearful from all they hear and see around them; Patience in times of school closures
- Guidance for school administrators as they make decisions
- Workers who are anxious about the safety of their workplaces; Uncertainty in how work will be accomplished in the days ahead.
- Calm and guidance amid financial uncertainties
- Government institutions and municipal agencies
- Houses of worship and their ministries at this time
- For all who travel
- For those who are vulnerable, sick, or homebound
- For all who grieve the loss of loved ones

*Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

**The Lord’s Prayer** Our Father in heaven, hallowed by 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. *Save us from the time of trial* and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

**The Peace** Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God. The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Hymns** See the song sheet also attached to the email, or pull out your ELW hymnal for these songs: “How Can I Keep From Singing” ELW #763 (Otherwise known as “My Life Flows On in Endless Song”) and “When Peace Like a River” ELW #785

Homily by Pastor Christine:

It is the time of Lent, when we prepare for the great Easter promise, the promise of Resurrection and new life. The word Lent means spring. It means renewal. I think of Lent as a time of spring cleaning, on working upon ourselves and our faith. Never did we think Lent would be like this though, that we would be locked away from each other for the safety of all concerned. It is not the time we chose, but it is the time we have. Therefore, in our remaining weeks of this practice we call Lent, you will find that our theme has been altered. Some of us are finding we are barely hanging on to the hem of Jesus' cloak, longing for healing, grasping for answers, and fearful of the future. And yet, even now, the passage of death to life also known as the paschal mystery – EASTER belongs to us. As Christ- has died, so we die to sin and death; and as Christ has raised from death, so too shall we.

Just the idea that we may not worship together or be together in our usual way is loss. It is loss for other faith communities. It is loss for schools. It is loss for individuals. It is loss of work, loss of identity, loss of health, loss of physical presence. And, yet what we are doing now by isolating ourselves and keeping our distance from physical fellowship is life to others. It is placing value upon the lives now living. Really, can there be a better understanding of the Lenten journey than sacrifice out of love. Can there be a better example of the passing over from death into life? The practice of Lent is exactly that – a movement, a journey from one place to the next. It is a movement from all the dead ways of being to the new ways of being, from the dark to the empty tomb. Even in the midst of all this chaos, it is important to remember that we are an Easter people. No matter how long this loss may endure, the glimmer of new life is always there. And It is what we celebrate and look to.

Today, our music director Roxanne Litchfield Holey will follow service with a few beloved hymns on Facebook live. You will be able to follow that once you click out of this live video at the end of our prayer time. The hymns that are selected every week are very purposeful. Today's songs were chosen for two reasons: they were hymns that were written during a time of great distress in the lives of the ones who wrote them but they are also hymns that speak of the joy in the promises of resurrection. I point this out because that is exactly what this time is for the world: it is a time of great distress, but within that is Easter, the Resurrection, and the empty tomb.

Our Faith Family ministry met last evening via ZOOM. This is a brave new world attempting to be church from indoors! They would like to invite you to join them in what they are calling "Thirty Days of Goodness", which will begin this Sunday. For 30 days, we will make it a practice to see the signs of grace around us, even and especially when it's difficult. More will be coming on that soon but suffice to say, we will be asking you to find a seed of grace and goodness every day and making a habit of looking for and seeing that in your life.

May you be comforted dear Siblings in Christ in the knowledge that even now the God of love longs to give you strength. May we together look for these signs of life that God longs to show us each day. Amen.