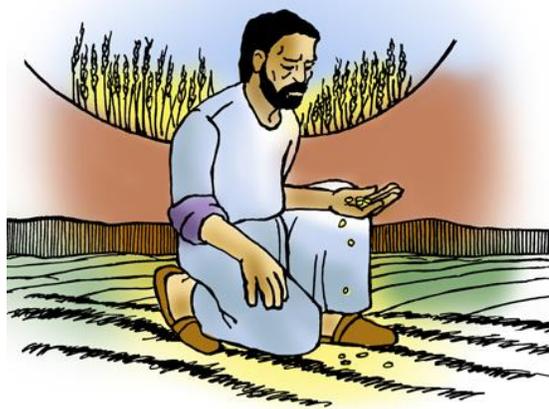


Worship in the Home: March 21, 2021

Posted on March 16, 2021 by ELCA Worship



Worship in the Home

Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year B

March 21, 2021

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

The Asian and Pacific Islander Association of the ELCA recently [issued a statement](#), affirmed by the ELCA Conference of Bishops, calling on the church to declare a day of lament during Lent to express solidarity with, help in healing and support Asian American victims of violence. Sunday, March 21, has been named as the common date, though worshiping communities may choose a different date as appropriate for their context. [Worship resources are available](#) that may be used in home worship or other settings.

God promises Jeremiah that a "new covenant" will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God's heart through Christ and draws God's love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God's love with all the world.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle and place a bowl of water in remembrance of your baptism. One person may lead this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

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

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers.

Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,

now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 51:1-12

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

²Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.

³For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.

⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother’s womb.

⁶Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.

⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:5-10

Using priestly imagery and references to the Old Testament, the author explains how Christ lived in trusting obedience to God, and so God has made Christ the source of our eternal salvation.

⁵Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;

⁶as he says also in another place,
“You are a priest forever,

according to the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek..

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 12:20-33

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover festival. Here Jesus' words about seeds planted in the ground turn the disaster of his death into the promise of a harvest in which everyone will be gathered.

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

Things fall apart. People break their covenant with God. We sin. We die. But “come and see,” says the Gospel according to John. And with the Greeks and Philip and Andrew, here at the end of Lent in our homes, we do. We see the cross. That Jesus is lifted up is at the same time his death and his glorification. He is the falling seed that becomes a huge harvest. What we think is an awful death has become the center that draws all things and all people into a new unity in God as if God has married them in a new covenant. The sufferings of Christ have become the source of eternal salvation. In baptism we have been drawn into that salvation, marked with that cross, made part of that new covenant, made alive. In baptism, we have received the very Spirit poured out from Christ and we have been forgiven. Exactly in God’s forgiveness, all of us — least and greatest, wise and not so wise — come to know who God really is. Then we ourselves can learn to turn with forgiveness to our neighbors.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read “Seed That in Earth Is Dying” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 330), “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 759), “To Christ Belong, in Christ Behold” (All Creation Sings 958). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[My Faith Looks Up to Thee](#)

[To Christ Belong, in Christ Behold](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

On this fifth Sunday in Lent, let us offer both our laments and our petitions to God, responding to each petition with words from today's psalm, "have mercy on us."

A brief silence.

O God, we lament that over the past months many Christians have not be able to assemble in person for worship. Many believers have languished alone. And we pray: Strengthen all Christians in every church around the globe in the covenant of their baptism. Equip children and teachers in Sunday school, confirmation, and service projects, whether online or in person.

A brief silence.

O faithful God, in your steadfast love,

have mercy on us.

We lament that by indulging our own desires, we have misused your creation and have worsened the poverty of others. And we pray: Continue your care for the earth you have made. Protect animals and their habitats. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds, and shelter all lands from violent storms, flooding, and wildfires.

A brief silence.

O almighty God, in your steadfast love,

have mercy on us.

We lament that as a nation we have not insured justice for all and equal access to freedoms and to the necessities of life. We lament ongoing prejudices and violence on our streets and in our homes. And we pray: Bring an end to warfare and terrorism. Imbue our courts with truth and wisdom. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all.

A brief silence.

O righteous God, in your steadfast love,

have mercy on us.

We lament the sufferings of people the world over. We lament the sorrows of the pandemic. We lament hunger, homelessness, and loneliness. And we pray: End this pandemic. Provide vaccinations to all persons around the earth. Guide us in healing the sick, welcoming the migrant, feeding the hungry, and living with others in harmony. We pray especially for

A brief silence.

O benevolent God, in your steadfast love,

have mercy on us.

We lament the hopelessness that afflicts so many people. We lament the anguish of refugee camps, of overcrowded hospitals, of unhappy homes. And we pray: As this Thursday we celebrate the annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Mary, instill in us gratitude for your presence among humankind, for holding us through sorrow, and for leading us into joy.

A brief silence.

O compassionate God, in your steadfast love,

have mercy on us.

We lament our secret sorrows known only to you, and we ask you to receive the prayers of our hearts.

A longer period of silence.

O mothering God, in your steadfast love,

have mercy on us.

We lament the countless who have died of COVID and the diminishment of life that so many have endured. We praise you for those who have given us words for our lament and our praise, especially today Thomas Cranmer. At the end, bring us with all who have died in Christ into your everlasting presence.

A brief silence.

O everlasting God, in your steadfast love,

have mercy on us.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, Father of glory, in your bountiful Spirit, and in the name of Christ, our great high priest, now and forever.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Restore in Us, God" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 328), "Christ, the Life of All the Living" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 339). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Christ, the Life of All the Living](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Holy God,
our living Water, our faithful Companion, our true Guide,
by your Word you created a world with rivers and seas, wells and springs,
and in mercy you provided water for your people in the wilderness.
For your Word with the water of baptism, we thank you, O God.

We thank you, O God.

We praise you for Christ, who joined us in our desert,
calling us to righteousness, granting forgiveness,
and walking with us into newness of life.
For Jesus, your gracious Word, we glorify you, O God.

We glorify you, O God.

Through these days of Lent we plead for your Spirit,
that strengthened by your Word,
we may care for others and for the world you made,
and work for justice and peace for all.
For your Word in our hearts and minds, we praise you, O God.

We praise you, O God.

Receive our thanksgiving, and grant us your blessing,
Holy God, now and forever.

Amen.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you. (Our mailbox has a lock on it, so is secure.)

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

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be 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.

Then speak the Blessing:

Almighty God, Father, + Son and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[As Pants the Hart](#);" "[God So Loved the World](#);" "[There's a Wideness in God's Mercy](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday (commemoration of Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians, 1758) Psalm 119:9-16. **Tuesday** Acts 2:14-24. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Bishop of El Salvador, martyr, 1980) Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23). **Thursday** (Annunciation of Our Lord) Luke 1:26-38. **Friday** Philippians 2:12-18. **Saturday** Jeremiah 33:10-16. **Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday** Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:1 — 15:47 or March 15:1-39[40-27].

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from *All Creation Sings* will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Special Meeting, April 11th following worship.

Synod Assembly, 30 April – 2 May.

Good Friday Worship will be held April 2nd at 6:30 pm

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Bob Broberg, Carole Holten, Donna Jackson-Hein, Lois Goossen (Friend of Newgard's).

Pastor's Mid-week Message for March 17, 2021

I found this exemplary column by Jon Hauser in the Feb. 24 Brainerd paper to share with you:

Defending against the drift

Max De Pree was a successful businessman as CEO of Herman Mille office furniture company in the 1980s. He also wrote books and spoke on leadership and personal growth. De Pree was asked, "What is the most difficult thing that you personally have to work on?" He quickly replies his greatest challenge was to defend against his natural tendency to drift.

If you are a science fan, you will remember when you studied Newton's law of motion. Newton's second law of thermodynamics states that "every system left to its own devices always tends to move from order to disorder, ultimately it will reach the state of complete randomness, and will be unavailable for further work." This sounds a lot like me when football is on.

It is fascinating that the laws of humanity and Newton's laws of motion reach the same conclusion: By default, unless we fight against the drift, we will drift. Any given area of your life, unless you intentionally inject energy into it and stand on guard, will tend to move toward randomness, decay and insignificance.

If you are married, you are either working on staying married, or you are drifting toward divorce. You are either working on getting closer to God, or you are drifting apart from Him. You are either moving toward financial health, or you are drifting into financial chaos, oversight, and missed opportunities.

Albert Einstein said, "Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."

The book of wisdom in the Bible is the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 24:30-34 states, "I went past the field of sluggard, past the vineyard of someone who has no sense; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed, and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest - and poverty will come on you like a thief, and scarcity like an armed man."

You and I have been given a valuable vineyard called our lives. Is this pandemic draining, discouraging, and making so many things more difficult? Yes! Does it get tiring or discouraging at times, defending against the drift in our lives? Yes, it does. But it sure beats the sheer tragedy of wasting this valuable gift of life. You have been given a body, spirit, soul, mind, passions, gifts, talents, strengths, relationships, financial resources - all of these are a gift from the gracious loving hand of God. Don't give up. Neither God nor I have given up on you!

Evaluate your life, through prayer, and commit today to your next righteous (God-led) step to defend against the drift!