

Finding Hope in a House Divided and a World on Fire

A Midweek Prayer Liturgy

based on writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Week 2 - March 19, 2025

Welcome to worship! Lent is a time of the church year when Christians are invited to enter a period of reflection on our faith and how faith can guide our journey through life. As Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, we hear the words of the prophet Joel encouraging us to “Return to God with all our hearts.” These words describe the theme of Lent and invite us to delve deeper into our life of faith.

During our time of worship each Wednesday, we will hear the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer penned during his faithful journey through life and death.

Candles are available to light at any point throughout the service as you feel moved to pray or to remember a loved one. Those who are joining worship from home are also invited to light candles.

**Bold indicates congregational responses.*

Opening Sentences - from Letters and Papers from Prison (528)

By powers of good so wondrously protected,
we wait with confidence, befall what may.
God is with us at night and in the morning
and oh, most certainly on each new day.

Hymn - By Gracious Powers.....ELW 626



1 By gra - cious pow'rs so won - der - ful - ly shel - tered,
2 Yet is this heart by its old foe tor - ment - ed,
3 And when this cup you give is filled to brim - ming
4 Yet when a - gain in this same world you give us
5 By gra - cious pow'rs so faith - ful - ly pro - tect - ed,



and con - fi - dent - ly wait - ing come what may,
still e - vil days bring bur - dens hard to bear;
with bit - ter suf - f'ring, hard to un - der - stand,
the joy we had, the bright - ness of your sun,
so qui - et - ly, so won - der - ful - ly near,



we know that God is with us night and morn - ing,
oh, give our fright - ened souls the sure sal - va - tion,
we take it thank - ful - ly and with - out trem - bling
we shall re - mem - ber all the days we lived through
we live each day in hope, with you be - side us,



and nev - er fails to greet us each new day.
for which, O Lord, you taught us to pre - pare.
out of so good and so be - loved a hand.
and our whole life shall then be yours a - lone.
and go with you through ev - 'ry com - ing year.

Text: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906–1945; tr. Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000
Music: TELOS, Robert Buckley Farlee, b. 1950
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Psalmody - from Prayer Book of the Bible (42)

We pray these Psalms when we regard all that God does once for [God's] people as done for us, when we confess our guilt and God's grace, when we hold God true to [God's] promises on the basis of [God's] former benefits and request their fulfillment, and when we finally see the entire history of God with [God's] people fulfilled in Jesus Christ, through whom we have been helped and will be helped. For the sake of Jesus Christ, we bring God thanksgiving, petition, and confession.

Psalm 106:1-5 (*Read responsively.*)

¹Praise the LORD!

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.

²**Who can utter the mighty doings of the LORD,
or declare all his praise?**

³Happy are those who observe justice,
who do righteousness at all times.

⁴**Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people;
help me when you deliver them;**

⁵that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones,
that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation,
that I may glory in your heritage.

Hymn - In Christ There Is No East Or West.....ELW 650



1 In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,
2 In Christ shall true hearts ev-'ry-where their high com-mu-nion find;
3 Join hands, dis-ci-ples of the faith, what-e'er your race may be.
4 In Christ now meet both east and west, in him meet south and north;



but one com-mu-ni-ty of love through-out the whole wide earth.
his ser-vice is the gold-en cord close-bind-ing hu-man-kind.
All chil-dren of the liv-ing God are sure-ly kin to me.
all Christ-ly souls are one in him through-out the whole wide earth.

Text: John Oxenham, 1852-1941

Music: MCKEE, African American spiritual; adapt. Harry T. Burleigh, 1866-1949

Ask
IT SHALL BE GIVEN
Seek
YE SHALL FIND
Knock
IT SHALL BE OPENED
MATTHEW 7:7

Reading - Matthew 7:7-12

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for bread, would give a stone? Or if the child asked for a fish, would give a snake? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Reflection - from Discipleship (5-6)

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which has to be asked for, the door at which one has to knock.

It is costly, because it calls to discipleship; it is grace, because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly, because it costs people their lives; it is grace, because it thereby makes them live. It is costly, because it condemns sin; it is grace, because it justifies the sinner...

...Thus, it is grace as a living word, word of God, which speaks as God pleases. It comes to us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a forgiving word to the fearful spirit and the broken heart. Grace is costly, because it forces people under the yoke of following Jesus Christ; it is grace when Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Silence for reflection.

Who Am I? - from Letters and Papers from Prison (448-449)

Who am I? They often tell me,
I come out of my cell
Calm and cheerful and poised
Like a squire from his manor.

Who am I? They often tell me,
I speak with my guards
Freely and friendly and clear,
As though I were the one in charge.
Who am I? They also tell me,
I bear days of calamity
Serenely, smiling and proud,
like one accustomed to victory.

Am I really what others say of me?
Or am I only what I know of myself?

Restless, yearning, sick, like a caged
bird,
struggling for life breath, as if I were
being strangled,
starving for colors, for flowers, for
birdsong,
thirsting for kind words, human
closeness,

shaking with rage power lust and
pettiest insult,
helplessly fearing for friends so far
away,
too tired and empty to pray, to think,
to work,
weary and ready to take my leave of
it all?

Who am I? This one or the other?
Am I this one today and tomorrow
another?
Am I both at once? Before others, a
hypocrite
and in my own eyes a pitiful,
whimpering weakling?
Or is what remains in me like a
defeated army,
Fleeing in disarray from victory
already won?

Who am I? They mock me, these
lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, thou knowest me; O
God, I am thine!

Prayers - adapted from Letters and Papers from Prison (174-175)

God, be gracious and help us.
Give us strength to bear the pains of the world.
Do not let fear rule over us.
Give tender care to those we love,
Protect them from all evil and all danger.

Merciful God,
Forgive us everything in which we have sinned
Against you and others.
We trust in your grace
And commit our lives entirely into your hand.
We are with you, and you are with us, o God
We await your salvation and your kingdom.
Amen.

The 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.**

Blessing - from Letters and Papers from Prison (495)

Not always doing and daring what's random, but seeking the right thing,
Hover not over the possible, but boldly reach for the real.
Not escaping to thought, in action alone is found freedom.
Dare to quit anxious faltering and enter the storm of events,
carried alone by your faith and by God's good commandments,
then true freedom will come and embrace your spirit, rejoicing.
Amen.

Dismissal

Who is Christ for us, today?
The outcasts, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled, the suffering.
Go in peace to be with them.
Thanks be to God.

SERVING TODAY

Director of Music Ministries/Organist:Alan L. Hair
Reader:Elizabeth Stuart
Livestream:Kirk Sponaugle

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Referenced Works:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Works - Reader's Edition, Fortress Press, 2015
Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible, Broadleaf Books, 2022
Scripture references are from the NRSVue.