

Finding Hope in a House Divided and a World on Fire

A Midweek Prayer Liturgy

based on writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Week 4 - April 2, 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* (57)

But even in the deepest hopelessness God alone remains the one addressed. Neither is help expected from people, nor does the distressed in self-pity lose sight of the origin and the goal of all distress, namely God. The wrathful God is confronted countless times with [God's] promise, [God's] previous blessings, the honor of [God's] name among humanity.

Psalm 44:1-8 (*Read responsively.*)

¹We have heard with our ears, O God,
our ancestors have told us,
what deeds you performed in their days,
in the days of old:

²**you with your own hand drove out the nations,
but them you planted;
you afflicted the peoples,
but them you set free;**

³for not by their own sword did they win the land,
nor did their own arm give them victory;
but your right hand, and your arm,
and the light of your countenance,
for you delighted in them.

⁴**You are my King and my God;
you command victories for Jacob.**

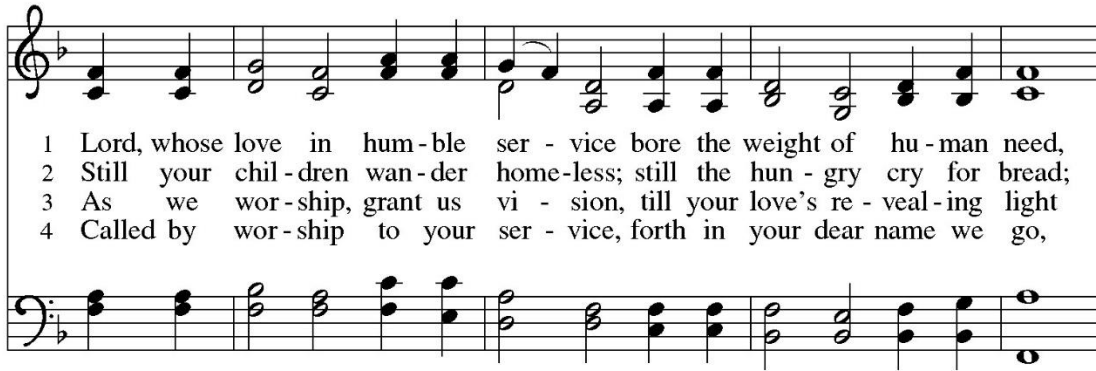
⁵Through you we push down our foes;
through your name we tread down our assailants.

⁶**For not in my bow do I trust,
nor can my sword save me.**

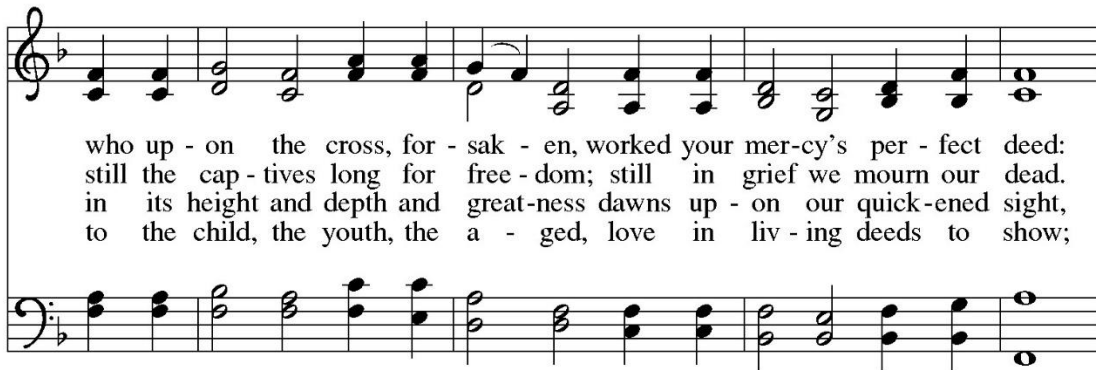
⁷But you have saved us from our foes,
and have put to confusion those who hate us.

⁸**In God we have boasted continually,
and we will give thanks to your name forever.**

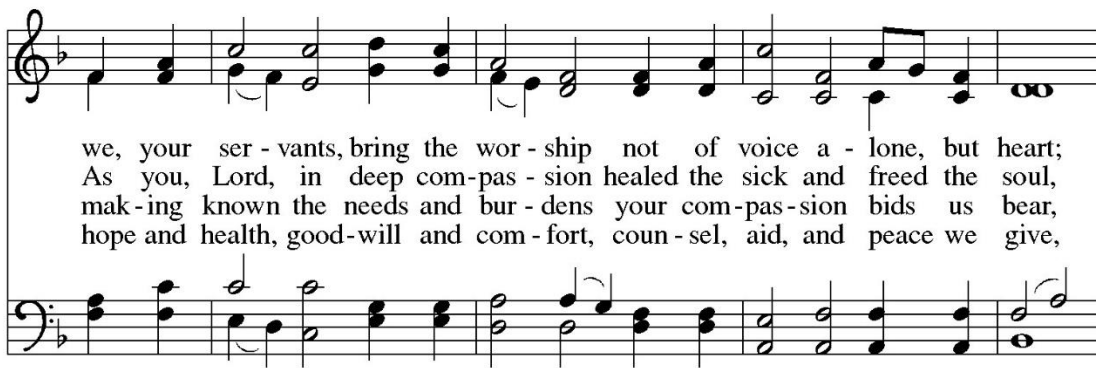
Hymn - Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service.....ELW 712



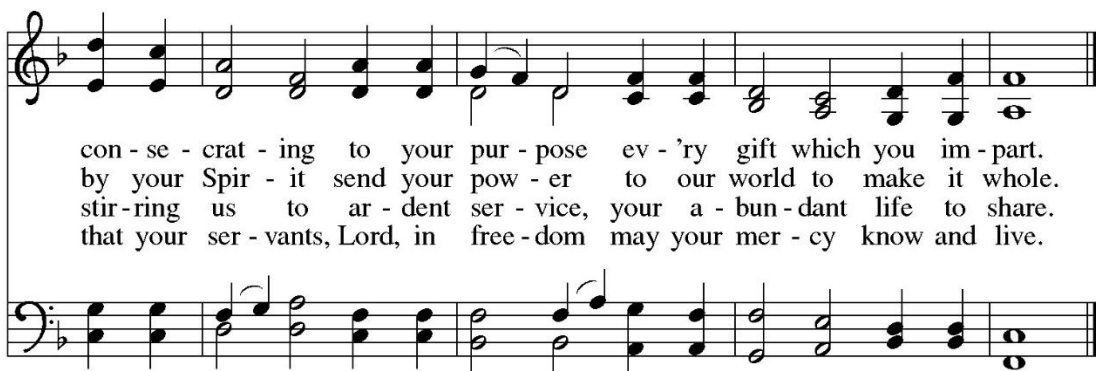
1 Lord, whose love in hum-ble ser - vice bore the weight of hu - man need,
 2 Still your chil - dren wan - der home - less; still the hun - gry cry for bread;
 3 As we wor - ship, grant us vi - sion, till your love's re - veal - ing light
 4 Called by wor - ship to your ser - vice, forth in your dear name we go,



who up - on the cross, for - sak - en, worked your mer - cy's per - fect deed:
 still the cap - tives long for free - dom; still in grief we mourn our dead.
 in its height and depth and great - ness dawns up - on our quick - ened sight,
 to the child, the youth, the a - ged, love in liv - ing deeds to show;



we, your ser - vants, bring the wor - ship not of voice a - lone, but heart;
 As you, Lord, in deep com - pas - sion healed the sick and freed the soul,
 mak - ing known the needs and bur - dens your com - pas - sion bids us bear,
 hope and health, good - will and com - fort, coun - sel, aid, and peace we give,



con - se - crat - ing to your pur - pose ev - 'ry gift which you im - part.
 by your Spir - it send your pow - er to our world to make it whole.
 stir - ring us to ar - dent ser - vice, your a - bun - dant life to share.
 that your ser - vants, Lord, in free - dom may your mer - cy know and live.

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901-1984
 Music: BEACH SPRING, *The Sacred Harp*, Philadelphia, 1844; arr. *Selected Hymns*, 1985
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Reading - *Philippians 2:1-13*

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Reflection - from Ethics (32-33)

God becomes human out of love for humanity. God does not seek out the most perfect human being with whom to be united, but takes on human nature as it is. Jesus Christ is not the transfiguration of noble humanity but the Yes of God to real human beings, not the dispassionate Yes of a judge but the merciful Yes of a compassionate sufferer. In this Yes all the life and all the hope of the world are comprised.

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: Jane Ebersole
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.